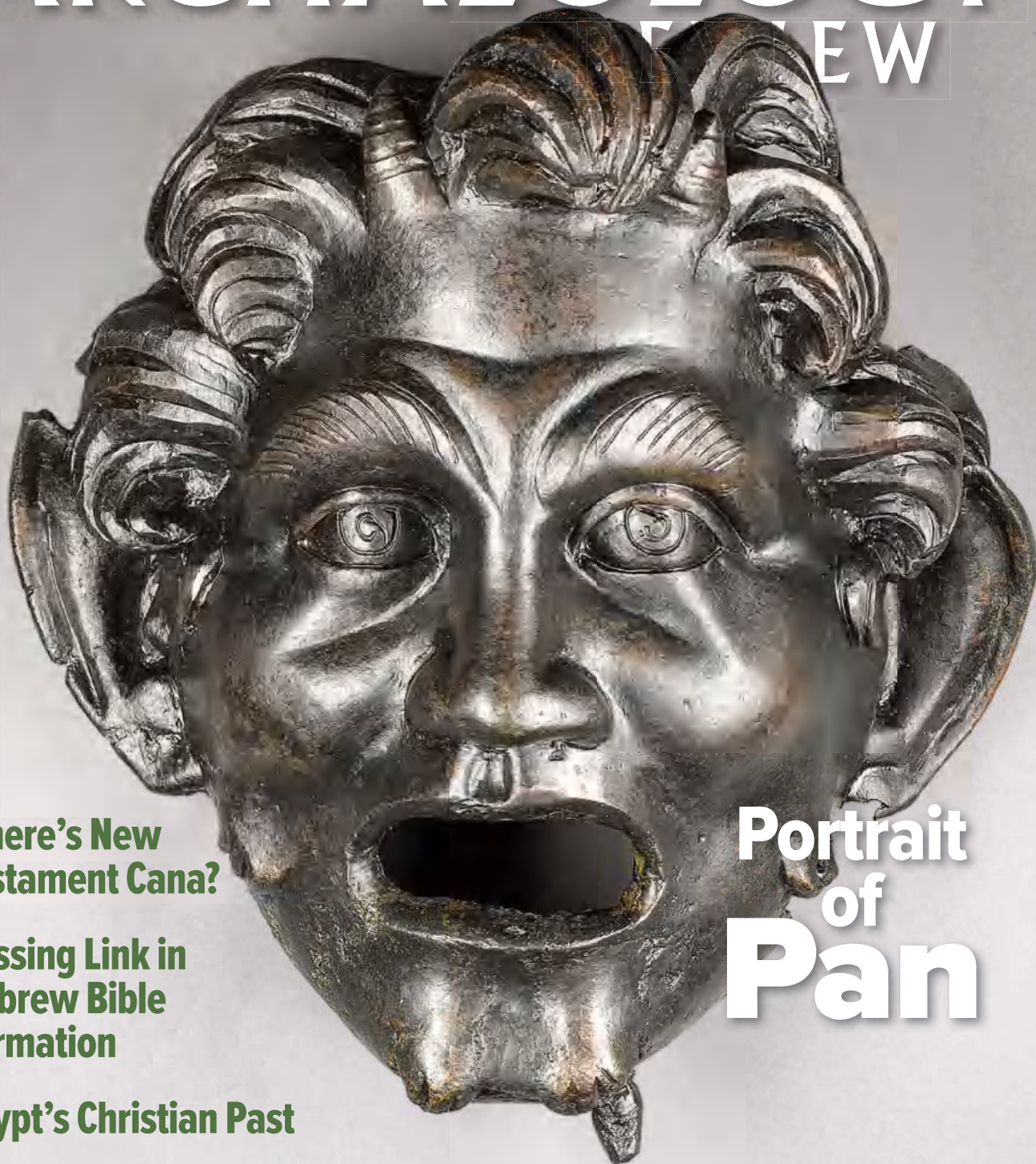


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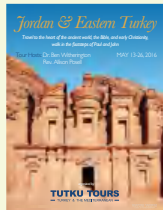
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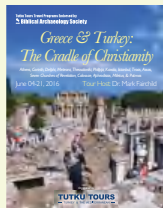
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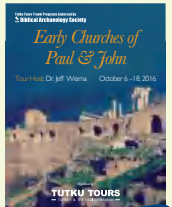
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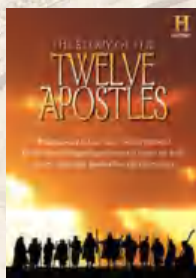


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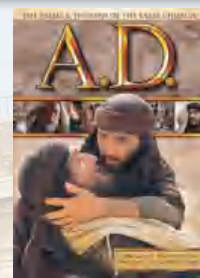
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### Paul the Emissary

The early first century followers of Jesus were a small, struggling group within Judaism who seemingly posed no threat to anyone, certainly not the mighty Roman empire. But there was one determined to see this fledgling faith exterminated. His name was Saul and he became the greatest persecutor of the early church. But within a matter of a few years, the Christians fiercest opponent became their most effective advocate. Struck down by a powerful conversion experience on the road to Damascus, Saul -- his name changed to Paul -- went on to become the greatest missionary in the history of Christianity. He went on to write more of the New Testament books than any other. In this impressive drama starring Garry Cooper we follow Saul the angry zealot to Paul the servant of Christ who will pay any price to bring his message to the world. 54 minutes.



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Jonathan Klawans

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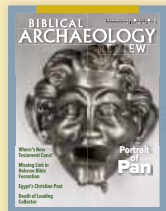
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Casey Sharp

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#### **ON THE COVER:**

The bronze mask uncovered at Hippos depicts a young man—most likely Pan or the Roman god

Faunus—with small horns on his head, a forelock, long pointed ears and strands of a goat beard.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL EISENBERG



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## FEATURES

### 30 Searching for Cana: Where Jesus Turned Water into Wine

Tom McCollough

Jesus performed his first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee when he turned water into wine. Where is Cana? Nine miles from Nazareth, Khirbet Cana is the best candidate. Excavations at the site have revealed a large Christian underground veneration complex.

### 40 Pan at Hippos—Face of Greek God Unearthed

Michael Eisenberg

Excavations at Hippos (Sussita) recovered an enormous bronze mask, most likely depicting the Greek god Pan (or Faunus in the Roman pantheon). Too large and heavy to have been worn as a theater mask, what purpose did it serve?

### 46 Missing Link in Hebrew Bible Formation

Paul Sanders

The oldest Hebrew Bible texts are the Dead Sea Scrolls (c. 250 B.C.E.–115 C.E.), but the most nearly complete copies of the Hebrew Bible are codices from a thousand years ago. What happened in the period between these two discoveries? The Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript fills the gap in our knowledge of this interim period.

### 53 Coptic—Egypt's Christian Language

Leo Depuydt

When did the ancient Egyptians stop writing in hieroglyphs, and what came next? From the fourth to ninth centuries C.E., Egypt was predominantly Christian. During this time, the language used by the masses was Coptic. What do we know about Coptic, and what has survived from Egypt's Coptic Christian period?

### 62 Renowned Collector Shlomo Moussaieff Dies at 92

Shlomo Moussaieff, who owned the world's largest private collection of Near Eastern antiquities, was both despised and celebrated. He recently passed away at 92. Where will his collection go?

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## ON THE WEB

### Christian Coptic Amulets

[biblicalarchaeology.org/incipits](http://biblicalarchaeology.org/incipits)

Leo Depuydt's article "Coptic—Egypt's Christian Language" in this issue features Coptic amulets containing *incipits* of Biblical passages. Learn more about Coptic *incipits* in a brand-new Bible History Daily guest post by Dr. Joseph Sanzo, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Christianity, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

### Biblical Bread: Baking Like the Ancient Israelites



COURTESY OF SEUNG HO BANG

[biblicalarchaeology.org/biblicalbread](http://biblicalarchaeology.org/biblicalbread)

This past summer, a team from the Tell Halif archaeological excavation made their own *tannur*, a traditional oven referenced in the Hebrew Bible, and baked bread in it. Excavation staff member Dr. Cynthia Shafer-Elliott chronicles the experiment in Bible History Daily.

### The First Christmas

[biblicalarchaeology.org/christmas](http://biblicalarchaeology.org/christmas)

The story of the first Christmas is retold year after year in Bible readings, carols and Christmas pageants. In the midst of all this, we might wonder what the story of Jesus' birth meant to the earliest Christians. In the free eBook *The First Christmas: The Story of Jesus' Birth in History and Tradition*, expert Bible scholars and archaeologists offer glimpses of the first Christmas as understood by those who originally told the beloved story.



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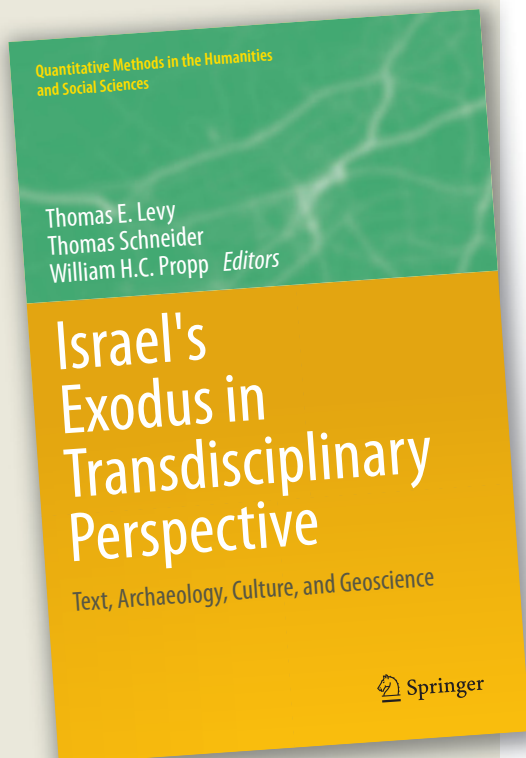
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## Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective

Text, Archaeology, Culture, and Geoscience

Thomas E. Levy, Thomas Schneider,  
W.H.C. Propp, Brad C. Sparks, Editors

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### Was there a possible volcanic cause for the Exodus?

New computer modeling on the Thera eruption is suggestive. Egyptian depictions of drowned soldiers? See the pictures. Learn about all this and more from:

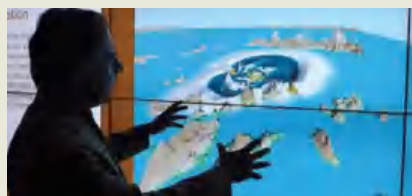
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**Egyptian depictions of drowned soldiers?**  
See the pictures in the book.

Painted depictions of walls of water in a Parting-of-Red-Sea-like setting, are followed by drowned soldiers (above), adorning pharaohs' underground tombs, ca. 1500-1100 BCE



**Possible volcanic cause of Exodus?**

UCSD Prof. Thomas E. Levy demonstrates live-animation 3D computer modeling of Thera eruption, showing tsunami wave that may have reached Egyptian coast ca. 1500 BCE. Many tsunami-like physical models of Exodus are under investigation.





Archaeological remains in Iraq and Syria are threatened daily. What impact has this turmoil had on the archaeology of these countries, and how does it compare to excavations in Israel?

## Archaeology in Israel and in Countries to the East

MY CRITICS WILL SAY I OFTEN WRITE about things I know nothing about. But this “First Person” is about something I admit I know nothing about: I want to compare archaeology in Israel with archaeology elsewhere in the Near East, more specifically in the swath of Syria and Iraq.

We observed our 40th anniversary in the March/April issue with an interview with Eric and Carol Meyers about developments in our field during the past 40 years. I just reviewed the text of a volume we are producing called *40 Futures*, which will be available in November 2015. It is a collection of 40 contributions by 40 leading scholars about likely developments in various subfields of archaeology in the next 40 years—from excavation techniques, to paleography, botany, pottery, etc. These future

developments can be summarized as more scientific, more subfields, more computers (even in the field), more detailed studies. Whether all this is good is still a question, but it seems inevitable. I remember Bill Dever, one of last generation’s leading archaeologists, telling me (although it is not original with him): “We are learning more and more about less and less until we will know everything about nothing.”

In short, Israel is about as exciting a place for archaeology as there is in the world—with excavations of large major tells to small farming installations, sites that bring thousands of volunteers to the country, hundreds of specialists from around the world, as well as hundreds of archaeologists and specialists from a major governmental agency (the Israel Antiquities Authority).

Compare this with what is happening and has been happening archaeologically in Syria and Iraq even before the current turmoil. Let me recognize at the outset: There are exceptions, like the Italian excavation at Ebla\* in Syria directed by Paolo Matthiae and the work of Glen Schwartz at Kurd Qaburstan in Kurdish Iraq. There are others. But sophisticated archaeology—certainly compared to Israel—has been largely absent from these countries in the past few decades.

There is another contrast between Israel and the nations to the east. The finds in Israel are for the most part visually unexciting. To the east were major ancient empires with impressive surviving structures, breathtaking statues and altars and fabulous cuneiform archives.

In Israel most of the exciting finds come from non-Israelite cultures. The opening of the archaeology section in Jerusalem’s Israel Museum features some Philistine anthropoid coffins, a suitably dramatic exhibit. There is plenty that is exciting about Israelite culture but little that knocks your eye out. Moreover, much of Israelite material culture is derivative. I think of the extraordinary Biblical painting in the Syrian synagogue of Dura-Europos: These paintings are Persian paintings although the subjects are Israelite. Ancient synagogues (like ancient churches) are models of Greek architecture.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 76

### The Horror of Archaeological Destruction

There is something strange writing about comparative archaeology, as I am doing in this “First Person,” when what is probably the most horrific deliberate destruction of archaeological remains in modern times is occurring at the hands of ISIS—most recently at Palmyra in Syria and before that at Mosul, Aleppo, Nineveh and Nimrud. Moreover, this has most recently been accompanied by the assassination of professionals who devoted their lives to studying and preserving these antiquities.

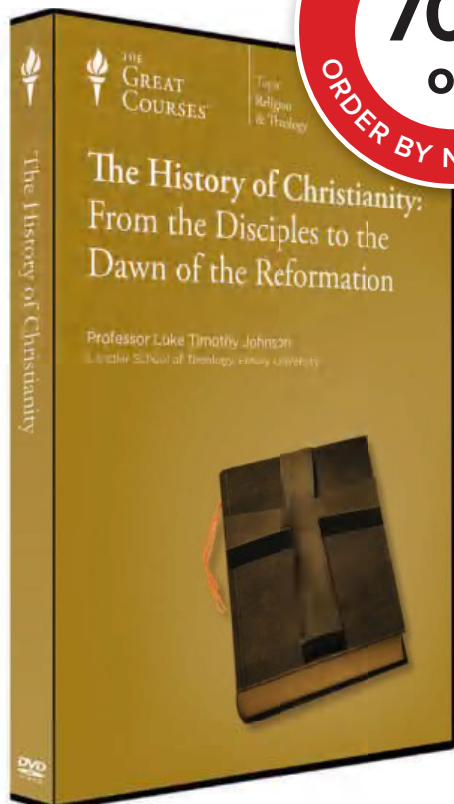
As I write, today’s *New York Times* reports that “the cumulative destruction of antiquities has reached staggering levels that represent an irreversible loss to world heritage and future scholarship.”

Beyond that what can be said? We abhor what these detestable extreme Islamists are doing. No civilized culture would engage in this behavior. Yet more civilized, non-Islamist Islamic cultures and other world powers all seem helpless to stop them.

Perhaps all we can do as a Biblical archaeology magazine is to go on doing what it is our mission to do—share information about archaeology in the Bible lands—as if so much of the Middle Eastern civilizations were not descending in horror.

\*“New Dig Reports,” *BAR*, September/October 2015.





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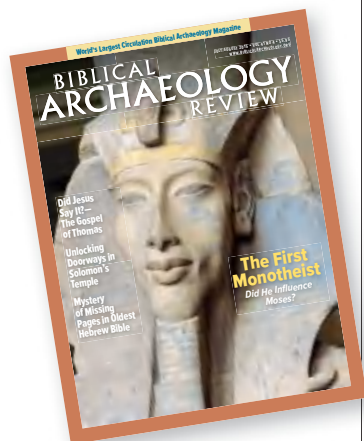
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**Obama's resemblance to Akhenaten? The significance of the number 5 in the Bible? Part of the Aleppo Codex stolen in Israel?**

## AKHENATEN, OBAMA AND MOSES

### Obama—Akhenaten Look-alike?

Your July/August cover was a good photo of President Obama dressed for a Cabinet meeting.

**RICHARD TAYLOR**  
HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

*Several readers have noted the resemblance of our cover photo of Akhenaten to President Obama.—Ed.*



### Two Monotheisms at Same Time

I read Brian Fagan's article on Akhenaten ("Did Akhenaten's Monotheism Influence Moses?" **BAR**, July/August 2015) with great interest and appreciated his detailed recounting of Akhenaten's attenuated career as a monotheistic pharaoh. Having two monotheistic faiths arise from the same general area in about the same timeframe certainly leads to fascinating speculation. I've always held out a possibility

that Akhenaten might have developed his monotheistic faith from contact with the foreign nomads from Canaan, who years before had brought with them a belief in one supreme god who transcended borders. It makes an interesting narrative to also consider the possibility that Horemheb in his purging of the Egyptian kingdom of this monotheistic heresy might expel these foreigners (come to be known as Hebrews) from the land.

**RAY PERRY**  
WOODLAND PARK, COLORADO

## FEATURED NUMBERS

### Don't Slight 5

In the July/August letter columns, Marc Brettler gives much attention to the number 4 in the Bible, but none to the number 5 (Q & C, "The Bible's Repeated Numerals," **BAR**, July/August 2015). Obvious instances of 5 are "the five fifths of the Law," the 5 books of the Psalms collection, the five megillot (Song of Songs, the Book of Ruth, the Book of Lamentations, Ecclesiastes [Qoheleth] and the Book of Esther), the five divisions of Ethiopic Enoch (noncanonical for most), and the somewhat less obvious instance of the structuring of the Book of Genesis with two series of toledot (generations) each with five units. Many ancient societies and groups favored and even revered the pentagram, the Pythagoreans, for example, and it was known to the learned in both Egypt and Greece that 5

is not just a prime number but the sum of two prime numbers. In the Hebrew Bible, the number 5 is especially in evidence in accounts of architectural details: Noah's ark (Genesis 6:15), the tent shrine in the wilderness (Exodus 26–27, 36, 38), Ezekiel's visionary temple (Ezekiel 40–41), and Solomon's temple beloved of Templars and Masons in which the pilasters and doorposts are in pentagonal shape (1 Kings 6–7; 2 Chronicles 3–4).

**JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP**  
PROFESSOR EMERITUS BIBLICAL STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

## ALEPPO CODEX

### Stolen In Israel?

I was happy to see **BAR**'s article ("The Mystery of the Missing Pages of the Aleppo Codex," **BAR**, July/August 2015), including a reference to my 2012 book on the subject.<sup>1</sup> The codex's story is a fascinating and important one, and there is no better academic scholar of this manuscript than the article's author, Professor Yosef Ofer, who was unfailingly helpful to me in my own research.

Regarding the key question about the missing pages of the codex, however—when, precisely, and where they went missing—I must respectfully differ.

Professor Ofer doubts the pages went missing in Israel. The document he mentions to support this view was ostensibly written in the 1950s by Rabbi Yitzhak Chehebar, who

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left Aleppo in 1952 for Buenos Aires and was one of the Aleppo community's most respected leaders.

In my book, I cite a filmed testimony from 1989 in which the same rabbi asserts that when he last saw the manuscript in hiding in Aleppo in 1952, only a small number of pages—"not even dozens"—were missing. This testimony is crucial, because it suggests that the disappearance of some 200 pages, including the Torah, happened after the book left Aleppo. This matches testimony from two other community members.

The document mentioned by Professor Ofer contradicts Rabbi Chehebar's own filmed testimony, asserting instead that in fact "nearly a quarter" of the manuscript was missing while it was still in Aleppo. If true, this would mean that suspicions about a theft in Israel are unfounded.

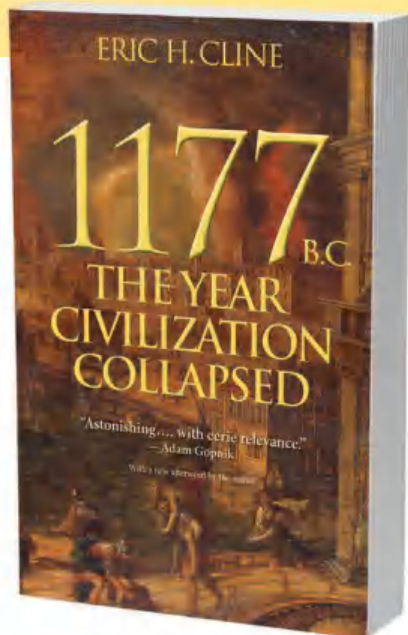
In other words, we have two testimonies from the same person, and one of them must be wrong. Discovering which

is a matter of importance to this mystery. I believe it is the later, filmed testimony.

The document presented by Professor Ofer in **BAR**, which I studied closely, demands more careful scrutiny. The five pages, found in files from the Ben-Zvi Institute, were written or edited by someone with a good grasp of modern Hebrew, including clear academic influences—chapter headings referring to the book's "time and place" and its "scientific value," for example. This seems unlikely to match the young Syrian rabbi, as Rabbi Chehebar had recently arrived in Argentina from Aleppo in the 1950s. Indeed, a surviving Hebrew letter from Rabbi Chehebar written in 1958 (and signed by him, unlike the document in question) is entirely different in its language, and was written on a different typewriter. Thus, this document can safely be regarded, at best, as a translation or transcript produced by a third party. Oddly, the document is written as if the codex is still in Aleppo—that is,

before the fall of 1957—but stamped with a contradictory date: April 24, 1960, by which time the codex had been in Israel for more than two years. This is another warning sign.

A final detail settles the argument, in my view. Sometime after the codex arrived at the Ben-Zvi Institute in 1958, someone there (almost certainly Itzhak Ben-Zvi himself) calculated that 23 percent was missing. This was an error—in fact, 40 percent was missing. Here is a very strange coincidence. Writing, or so we are to believe, before the codex ever left Aleppo, Rabbi Chehebar made precisely the same mistake as Ben-Zvi—that "nearly a quarter" was gone. We can hardly believe in such coincidences. The signs indicate that this odd document was prepared at the Ben-Zvi Institute, and only after the codex left Aleppo. It was meant to be attributed to the rabbi, but it cannot be. His later filmed testimony is the more credible by far. (Unfortunately, he is now deceased.)



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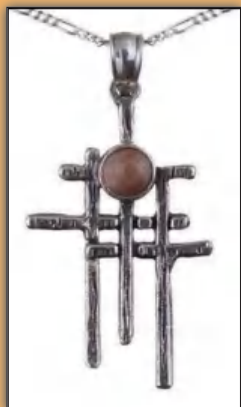


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## QUERIES & COMMENTS

Perhaps understandably, many scholars in Israel would like to believe that the disappearance of the codex's pages had nothing to do with scholars in Israel. I would like to believe that too. Unfortunately, the available facts do not allow us to draw that conclusion.

**MATTI FRIEDMAN**  
JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

<sup>1</sup> *The Aleppo Codex: In Pursuit of One of the World's Most Coveted, Sacred, and Mysterious Books* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2012).

### TIME INFLATION

#### Einstein Explained It

Re. First Person: "Time Inflation" (**BAR**, July/August 2015), my brother, who is about your age, suggested that time does not move any faster than it did when we were younger; rather, we have slowed down and it takes us longer to do things. This makes us perceive time as moving faster. Didn't Einstein say something like that?

**HANNA SMITH**  
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

#### Kudos!

What a great piece on "Time Inflation." Who can't relate!

**RON THOMAS**  
SULLIVAN, ILLINOIS

### The BAR Legacy

I love **BAR**. I want it to continue to offer its erudite, irascible, irreverent, penetrating insights for decades to come. To do that, it needs to be prepared to function if some of its leadership suddenly is no longer able to lead. I trust that a lively effort is being made to assure that it will continue for years to come.

**JAMES W. OPPENHEIMER-CRAWFORD**  
HYDE PARK, NEW YORK

*You're right, and we are.—Ed.*

### POTPOURRI

#### BAR Reader Is Archaeologically Up-to-Date

I have been a **BAR** reader since the early 1980s when I was a student at U.C. Berkeley. So **BAR** truly is like an old

friend. I was in the Department of Near Eastern Studies, and I was blessed to receive a first-class education with kind and honorable instructors like David Stronach, Guitty Azarpay, Wolfgang Heimpel, Ruggero Stefanini and others. In 1981, I was a dig volunteer via the Hebrew Union College and excavated at Tel Dan under Dr. Avraham Biran. In 1986, I returned to Israel and excavated at Tel Dor under Ephraim Stern. However, my life's path diverged from an academic one; I married, had three children and two stepchildren, and I stayed home to raise them. Through the years when we could afford it, I subscribed to **BAR**. I want to thank you so much for giving your time, money, blood, sweat and tears to its publication. You have blessed my life considerably, keeping me abreast with the archaeological world.

**GINA WILLIAMS**  
BURLINGAME, CALIFORNIA

#### Reading BAR Cover to Cover

Since my retirement, I have become one of those who reads **BAR** from cover to cover as soon as it arrives. I don't necessarily intend to do that, but one item simply leads on to another.

**CHARLES SILLIMAN**  
CORALVILLE, IOWA

#### B.C.E./C.E. Censors His Faith

I am inclined not to renew my **BAR** subscription. I strongly oppose and am offended by the growing use of B.C.E. and C.E. You should know I wrestled with the thought of writing this letter, not wanting to sound like a reactionary. I also would never insist all people should be made to acknowledge the importance of Christ in world history. But I can't help feeling this is a selective censoring of one faith and one faith alone.

I must also say I have learned much from reading **BAR** and will miss it.

**RICH OLSZEWSKI**  
DAYTON, OHIO

#### Degree in Archaeology Not Required

I have no degrees in archaeology, Hebrew, Semitic studies, etc. Zilch. No background whatsoever that would qualify me to read

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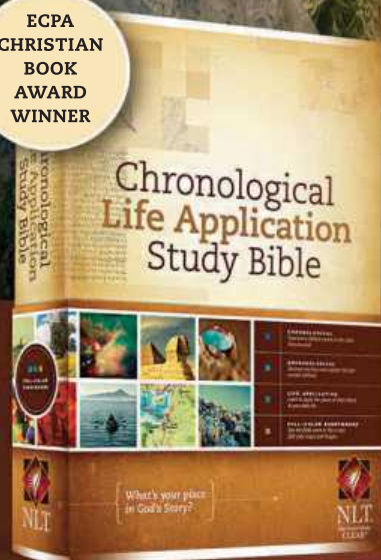


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## Beneath the Living Room Floor

What's underneath your living room floor? The answer for one Jerusalem family is pretty incredible: a 2,000-year-old *mikveh* (Jewish ritual bath)!

Last July, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced the discovery: When a family in the 'Ein Kerem neighborhood near Jerusalem began renovating their living room, they found more than they had bargained for. They uncovered a complete *mikveh*, approximately 11.5 feet long, 8 feet wide and 6 feet deep, which is now accessible through wooden doors in their living room floor (see upper left photo). Carved from stone and covered with hydraulic plaster, the *mikveh* has steps leading

to the bottom of the pool (see lower left photo). Second Temple-period pottery and fragments of stone vessels, which are not subject to impurity under Jewish law, were uncovered inside the *mikveh*.

The discovery establishes a Jewish connection in the area during the Second Temple period. This is especially significant to Christian tradition that identifies 'Ein Kerem with "a city of Judah" mentioned in Luke 1:39 as the place where Mary, the mother of Jesus, met with her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, while they were both pregnant. It is also regarded as the birthplace of John the Baptist.

## Dolphin in the Desert

Ahoy there, Flipper! What are you doing in the Negev?

Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) archaeologists excavating this past February and March near Kibbutz Magen in Israel uncovered an ancient dolphin statue dating back about 2,000 years. The statue depicts a dolphin diving downward with a fish in its mouth.

Kibbutz Magen is located in the northwestern Negev desert, close to the border of the Gaza Strip. The IAA archaeologists discovered

the marble statue within the ruins of a late Byzantine–early Umayyad period (fourth–seventh centuries C.E.) settlement. Alexander Fraiberg, who led the excavation, believes the marble statue dates to the Roman period and thus pre-dates the building in which it was found.

The archaeologists think that the ancient dolphin statue—the remains of which measure just under a foot and a half—could have been part of a life-size sculpture

depicting a god or goddess associated with dolphins.

"It is possible that the statue was of the [Greek] goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite, who was born from seafoam," IAA archaeologist Rina Avner explains. "It is also possible that the statue was of Poseidon, god of the sea."

The dolphin was a common motif in ancient Mediterranean art across millennia, from Minoan wall paintings to Greek vase paintings to Roman statuary.



CLARA AMIT, ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY



## Cool Hand Luke

Leonard J. Greenspoon

My students at Creighton University are great—smart, well prepared, fully engaged! If they do have a collective “Achilles’ heel,” it is a lack of knowledge about classic popular culture; that is, what I grew up with in the ‘60s and ‘70s.

When I ask them about Paul Newman, they know about his salad dressing and other nonprofit endeavors. But Paul Newman the actor (not to mention racecar driver)—they’ve never heard of him. No Paul Newman, no *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. That’s sad—but far sadder, no *Cool Hand Luke*, that late ‘60s anthem to, well, the late ‘60s.

Perhaps references to Luke (as in the Gospel of) in today’s popular culture could remedy this situation. Admittedly, not likely, but well worth a try!

One of the first articles on the Gospel I located (from London’s *Sunday Times*) bore this intentionally provocative headline: “St. Luke ‘a Fraud’ says historian.” The first sentence carries an arresting, if troubling, image: “Gospel truth may not be anything of the sort. St. Luke, one of the four evangelists, stands accused by an eminent Biblical scholar as a plagiarist and fraud.” Not much of a link here to Paul Newman’s Luke. Say what you will, he was nothing if not authentic.

Another story, this one from Canada’s *Globe and Mail*, might prove more promising (or less promising, depending on your perspective). Its headline is in the form of a question: “Was Jesus a ‘Party Animal’?” According to the *Mail*’s resident expert, Jesus was not only a “party animal,” but also a “social gadfly.” Basing himself primarily on references in the Gospel of Luke, this scholar concludes, “Jesus had a lot in common with modern-day tramps and street people.” A modern-day Luke could apply such a characterization, with some minor refinements, to Paul Newman’s Cool Hand Luke!

In many ways, Cool Hand Luke was an original, the source for many “cool guys” who followed. Wouldn’t you know it? Against the combined wisdom of almost all New Testament scholars, a few now argue that “Luke was the earliest of the Gospel stories, and that Mark had used Luke in writing his account” (as reported in the *Jerusalem Post*). Ah, Luke the rebel trailblazer, in antiquity as in the modern world.

Cool Hand Luke, like the real-life Paul Newman, was in great shape, at least until he suffered under the sadistic warden who brutalized him. Not so the gospel writer, who, according to another

*Times* of London story, “was a stocky man with a bad back who was arthritic and short of breath.” This rather full diagnosis comes from a study of Luke’s bones, which have long been on deposit at the Basilica of Santa Guistina in Padua. Skeptics (of whom I am one, at least in this instance) can doubt the authenticity of such a study, but for sure the remains of Cool Hand Luke (admittedly a fictional character) would yield a very different picture of the flesh-and-blood man behind them.

Oops! I almost forgot this “scientific” rejoinder to the previously mentioned skeptics: As reported in the *Irish Times*, “DNA Analysis Proves St. Luke [or specifically the bones deposited at Padua] Is Who They Say He Is.” The “proof”: “Genetic fingerprinting used mitochondrial DNA [to show that] the body was most likely [a] Syrian ... who had died between 72 and 416 A.D., bracketing Luke’s supposed year of death nicely.” I opine that no such complex procedures would have been needed on Cool Hand Luke’s remains, if only he had actually lived!

We close with a reference from one of my favorite parts of any newspaper, the sports section. “Rugby Players Reveal Their Gospel Truth” is the headline (from Wellington, New Zealand’s *Dominion*



*Post*). The story begins like this: “The Gospel according to [professional rugby player] Brad Thorn is now available, as part of a rugby-themed edition of a Bible chapter published to coincide with the Rugby World Cup. God-zone is a re-vamped version of the Gospel of Luke, featuring the entire text of the New Testament chapter interspersed with the life stories of 10 international players whose lives have been transformed by their Christian faith ... Luke’s Gospel was chosen because it contained the popular nativity scene, and contained the story of a lost sheep—giving it a New Zealand flavour.”

Nothing objectionable about this, I guess. But I can also imagine a not necessarily revamped version of *Cool Hand Luke* with testimonials of how it changed people’s lives, non-rugby as well as rugby players. Clearly, the stories would differ substantially, but these tales might actually serve to bridge the gulf between Luke the gospel writer and Luke the Cool Hand guy. And that, after all, is what this column has been all about!

## Mummy Scam?

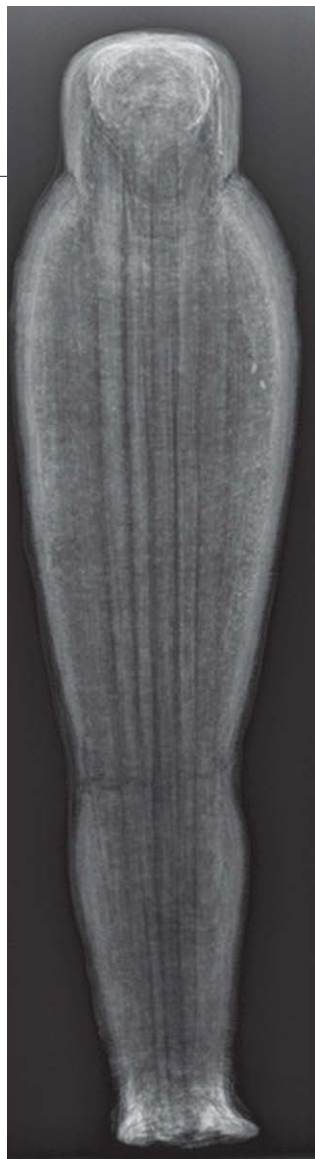
Millions of animals were mummified in ancient Egypt as votive offerings to the gods. While many of these mummies contain actual animals, quite a few have been uncovered that are empty. Others contain just part of an animal.

Was this an ancient scam?

Dr. Lidija McKnight from the University of Manchester contends that it was not. She is a research associate for the Ancient Egyptian Animal Bio Bank Project, which has analyzed more than 800 animal mummies from collections in the U.S., Europe and Britain. Of this amount, around a third of the mummies were boneless. Some were fashioned out of linens padded with various items—such as twigs, reeds and mud—to resemble an animal. Others contained animal products—like feathers and eggshells.

McKnight explains that the ancient Egyptians were probably aware that they were not getting fully mummified animals, and they likely did not care. They believed that part of an animal—or material associated with an animal—could be substituted for the whole. Thus, these “empty” mummies would still have been viewed as acceptable offerings, which is all that would have mattered to them.

*Gifts for the Gods: Animal Mummies Revealed*, a new exhibit at the Manchester Museum, delves into the



**This falcon mummy from the Manchester Museum contains no animal material—only reeds that appear as gray lines down the mummy bundle on the x-ray—even though there is no indication on the exterior of the mummy that it is “empty.”**

background and purpose of these animal mummies in ancient Egypt. It also explores how these mummies were excavated and how some

## NEW DIG REPORTS

### Galilee in the Early Bronze Age

During the Early Bronze Age, the land of Canaan (the Southern Levant) underwent a process of urbanization. It was during this period that fortified cities emerged and Canaanite sites began to interact with Egypt.

#### BET YERAH

**Bet Yerah: The Early Bronze Age Mound, vol. 2, Urban Structure and Material Culture, 1933–1986 Excavations. IAA Reports 54**

*By Raphael Greenberg*

(Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2014), 312 pp., \$30 (paperback)

Tel Bet Yerah (Khirbet Kerak), best known for its Early Bronze Age remains, rests on the southwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. William F. Albright—the father of modern Biblical archaeology—once remarked that Bet Yerah was “perhaps the most remarkable Bronze Age site in all Palestine.” This thorough volume edited by Professor Raphael Greenberg of Tel Aviv University shows that Albright was on to something.

Not only was Bet Yerah one of the first fortified cities in its region (c. 3000 B.C.E.), but it also developed unique interactions with its neighbors to the north and south, such as Egypt. Additionally, migrant communities from the South Caucasus region, who came to the site around 2800 B.C.E., manufactured Khirbet Kerak Ware, a distinctive form of pottery first discovered by modern archaeologists at Bet Yerah.

While Bet Yerah was also settled sporadically in later periods, the most recent volume focuses on the architecture and artifacts from the Early Bronze Age. It provides a snapshot of what life was like in Galilee during this period.



ended up in British collections. While the research of animal mummies is a relatively new field, the exhibit makes clear that it has a

promising future—especially thanks to technology that makes it possible to examine these mummies without damaging them.



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February 3 – St. Thomas,  
U.S. Virgin Islands

February 4 – St. Maarten

February 5 – At Sea

February 6 – At Sea

February 7 – Ft. Lauderdale



### Meet Jodi Magness

Professor Magness holds a senior endowed chair in the department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill: the Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism. Since 2011 she has directed an excavation at Huqoq in Galilee.



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## Saul and David: A Genuine Rembrandt

For more than a century, the Mauritshuis museum in The Hague, Netherlands, has been in possession of Rembrandt's *Saul and David*. Before the Biblical work had become part of this collection, however, it had been unceremoniously split in two and then later put back together.

In 1969, acclaimed art historian Horst Gerson examined the painting and declared that this was no Rembrandt. He thought it lacked the typical painterly execution of the famous Dutch artist. Thus, the attribution for the painting was changed to read "Rembrandt and/or Studio."

A recent study, however, concludes the opposite: *Saul and David* is indeed Rembrandt's workmanship. After four and a half decades, the museum decided to launch its own study of the piece. Beginning in 2007, the study

lasted eight years.

The painting, which is the focus of the Mauritshuis's new exhibit *Rembrandt? The Case of Saul and David*, depicts a youthful David playing the harp for King Saul. According to 1 Samuel 16:14–23, David first enters the palace as a musician. He is hired to play the lyre for King Saul, who was tormented by an evil spirit. In 1 Samuel 19:9–10, Saul tries to pin David to the wall with his spear while David is playing the lyre for him, but David escapes.

The new exhibit *Saul and David* presents to the public the CSI (Crime Scene Investigation) type of scrutiny that led the researchers to conclude that this painting is indeed a Rembrandt. While it is possible that future art historians might disagree with the current ruling, the Mauritshuis considers this issue finally settled.

## Best of BAR: "Buy Low, Sell High"

The Biblical Archaeology Society is proud to announce "Buy Low, Sell High: The Marketplace at Ashkelon" by Daniel M. Master and Lawrence E. Stager (January/February 2014) as the winner of the Best of **BAR** award for articles published in 2013–2014. The article looks at the site of Ashkelon, a powerful Philistine city on the Mediterranean coast during the Iron Age. Ashkelon's marketplace reveals the workings of both the local and international economy before Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city in 604 B.C.E. Using the artifacts discovered at Ashkelon, the article shows how archaeologists have been able to reconstruct the daily lives of both merchants and residents.

The article was chosen by judges Mary Joan Winn Leith and Jane Cahill West. Mary Joan Winn Leith is Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts. Jane Cahill West served as a senior staff archaeologist for the Hebrew University's City of David Archaeological Project and codirected the Tell el-Hammah excavations.

She is an attorney and career clerk for a federal judge in Houston, Texas.

They selected the article because it presents significant new

information from recent excavations clearly and highlights the project's multidisciplinary approach. It also recognizes the important contributions of the many people who helped to implement that approach successfully.

The Best of **BAR** award is made possible by the longtime generous support of the Leopold and Clara M. Fellner Charitable Foundation through its trustee Frederick L. Simmons of Glendale, California.

### Buy Low, Sell High



The Marketplace at Ashkelon

## IN HISTORY



**NOVEMBER 13, 1143 A.D.** King Fulk of Jerusalem died. He ruled the Kingdom of Jerusalem, which was established after the First Crusade in 1099 A.D., from 1131 A.D. until his death.



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## Tourist's Traumatic Tumble

Last May, a tourist tripped in the Heraklion Archaeological Museum on the island of Crete. To break her fall, she grabbed hold of the closest thing to her: a 4,000-year-old Minoan pithos (middle storage container in the above photo). Both she and the pithos fell to the ground. The tourist suffered minor injuries to her legs, and the pithos lay shattered on the floor.

This is not the first time—nor will it be the last—that a tourist has damaged an artifact on display at a museum. It is one of the dangers of making treasures available to the public, but the pros are considered to far outweigh the cons.

While the tourist received attentions from medics, the pithos was taken to the museum's conservation professionals. Within a week, they had restored the pithos and returned it to its exhibition.

### WHAT IS IT?

- A** Potter's wheel
- B** Millstone
- C** Weight
- D** Cart wheel
- E** Decorative eye



COURTESY RHOD GALLI

ANSWER ON P. 70

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*Matthew 2:11 recounts that the wise men brought Jesus gold, frankincense and myrrh—costly gifts. In antiquity, frankincense and myrrh were both used in incense and perfume. Alan Millard, Rankin Professor Emeritus of Hebrew and Aramaic Languages at the University of Liverpool, explains the ancient origins of incense—both its sacred and profane uses.<sup>1</sup>*



Incense was an integral part of worship of the gods across the ancient Near East from the earliest periods ...

We may assume that in prehistoric times people noticed that certain things gave off a pleasant smell when put on fire ...

Observing that wood or sap or resin from particular trees were productive, they experimented with others, so that some were sought especially for the purpose ...

What human beings enjoyed, they would expect their gods to enjoy also and, as usual, they lavished that on their deities. By the end of the third millennium B.C., documents from Babylonia record a wide variety of materials used for perfumes and incense, derived from various vegetable substances—resins, shavings, twigs—and incense burners occur in cuneiform texts from the Early Bronze Age into the Iron Age.

Lists of materials for making perfumes in cuneiform texts at Mari include cedar, cypress, juniper, myrtle—either the woods themselves or the resins—and various resins hard to identify. Although these lists and recipes for making perfumes are not specifically for incense, they show the variety of ingredients available from within the Fertile Crescent. The materials burnt as incense vary from the readily available to the exotic ...

The instructions for preparing the sacred incense in Exodus 30:34–38 end with a prohibition on anyone making the same incense for their own use, prescribing the most severe punishment for anyone who might do so. Yet, as commonly observed, that implies there were other types of incense which Israelites could use in “secular” situations; Proverbs 27:9, “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart,” may indicate that, and Psalm 45:9[8] refers to the wafting of the smoke of incense into clothes ...

In both Babylonia and Egypt texts prescribe incense as a fumigant in medical processes, as a counter to the stench of putrefaction and as a counter to domestic smells, perfuming houses and clothes. The two last uses continue to the present day. Over 30 years ago, a British journalist reported how a Sa’udi sheikh stood over an incense burner to allow the aromatic smoke to seep into his robes.

<sup>1</sup> From “Incense—the Ancient Room Freshener: The Exegesis of Daniel 2:46,” in James K. Aitken, Katharine J. Dell and Brian A. Mastin, eds., *On Stone and Scroll Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies* (Berlin/Boston: DeGruyter, 2011).



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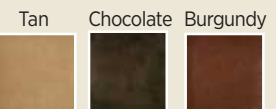
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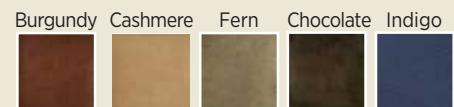
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## Pricey Painting

In 1914 the czar of Russia purchased Leonardo da Vinci's *Benois Madonna* for \$1.5 million. It now hangs in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russia.

In 2015 the *New York Times* computed how long it would take a person making the average per capita income at the time to earn enough to buy the picture for the price it had been sold. In addition to the *Benois Madonna*, the *Times* computed the figure for paintings by Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso and Gauguin.

Leonardo's *Benois Madonna* led all the rest. The average annual per capita income at that time was \$404. At that rate it would take the earner 3,713 years to earn enough to purchase the *Benois Madonna*.

## EXHIBIT WATCH

### Ancient Egypt Underwater

Besieged by a cataclysmic earthquake and engulfed in tidal waves, the once-great cities of Heracleion and Canopus in Egypt's Nile Delta sank into the sea in the eighth century A.D. They remained hidden until 2000, when the European Institute for Underwater Archaeology organized an expedition to the submerged area—approximately 40 square miles—where they believed the cities were located. Directed by marine archaeologist Franck Goddio, the expedition has discovered two, or maybe three, cities.

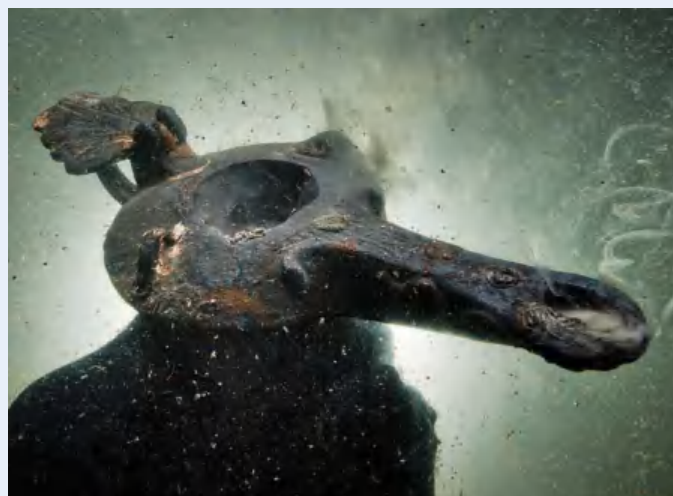
From statues of Egyptian gods, pharaohs and priests to jewelry, steles and architectural columns, the expedition has uncovered many stunning finds, some of which will be on display for the first time in the exhibit

**Osiris, Sunken Mysteries of Egypt** at the Arab World Institute in Paris. Two hundred and ninety artifacts, including an oil lamp (below) found near a temple at Heracleion that would have been used in ancient

ceremonies for the Egyptian god Osiris, will appear in the exhibit. **Osiris, Sunken Mysteries of Egypt** will also feature film footage, which will create a special viewing experience for attendees.

Heracleion and Canopus stood for about a thousand years before being swallowed by the sea. Heracleion was founded around the eighth century B.C., and the earliest mention of Canopus comes from the early sixth century B.C. Both cities are known from ancient and Classical sources, and now, thanks to maritime archaeology, the cities are known to us once more.

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CHRISTOPH GERICK



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## HOW MANY?

*How many tons does the largest ancient stone block weigh?*

ANSWER ON P. 70



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—Sebastian Brock (University of Oxford)

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The high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jerobo'am with the sword.

—Amos 7:9, Revised Standard Version

The ridiculous idols' shrines will be laid waste, the sanctuaries of Israel will be laid waste, I will arise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

—Amos 7:9, Syriac Peshitta

What are the "high places of Isaac"? The Hebrew is unclear. By referring to the Aramaic, the meaning of the verse makes sense in its context.

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## CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

CARLTON STOIBER



**“Your cup runneth over (your pants).”**

—Bernard Alpinier, Libertyville, Illinois

Thank you to all those who submitted caption entries for our July/  
August 2015 cartoon (above), based on Ecclesiastes 10:19:

Feasts are made for laughter;  
wine gladdens life,  
and money meets every need.

We are pleased to congratulate Bernard Alpinier of Libertyville,  
Illinois, who wrote the winning caption, and our runners-up:

**“Here son. Go buy yourself a strong cup of coffee,  
get cleaned up, and I won’t tell your Mother.”**

—Diedre Cagle, Spring Hill, Florida

**“I guess we didn’t pay you enough to be  
the ‘designated’ camel driver!”**

—Jerry Ackerman, Dover, Ohio

Write a caption for the cartoon below, and send it to us by mail or online on our website (see box below):

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Be sure to include your name and address. The deadline for entries is November 30, 2015. The author of the winning caption will receive a copy of the BAS book *The Origins of Things*, a BAS tote bag and three gift subscriptions to give **BAR** to friends. Runners-up will receive a BAS tote bag and two gift subscriptions.



CARLTON STOIBER



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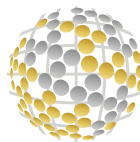
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**After the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E., did large numbers of Jews abandon Judaism altogether?**

## A Crisis of Faith in the Wake of the Temple's Destruction?

Jonathan Klawans

THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E. wreaked havoc on the Jews of that time and place. There must have been great loss of life, limb, property and pride. Surely many were slaughtered, and the survivors—particularly women and children—must have suffered terribly.

The one witness to these events whose testimony has come down to us—the Jewish historian Josephus—speaks at length about the horror. This suffering began, he claims, even before the Temple burned: The besieged city starved to such an extent that a woman was driven to cannibalize her own young son (*Jewish War* 6.201–213). As the Temple burned, Josephus tells us, “No pity was shown for age, no reverence for rank; children and greybeards, laity and priests, alike were massacred” (6.271). As for numbers, Josephus says 97,000 were taken prisoner, and more than 1.1 million died (6.420).

Josephus’s reliability is notoriously questionable. How did he come by these numbers? Josephus was a Jewish priest and rebel who later switched allegiances. Readers may surely wonder if his intent was to maximize Jewish suffering in order to highlight Roman power. On the other hand, the account of cannibalism is taken right out of the Hebrew Bible: Lamentations 4:10, for instance, mourns a similar scenario, following the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E.

Perhaps none of this really matters: It stands to reason that the suffering was catastrophic. Whatever the numbers, and with or without familial cannibalism, surely the suffering was widespread. Most historians of ancient Judaism describe the event as calamitous indeed.

But there is an interesting trope that appears in some scholarly descriptions of Jewish reactions to 70 C.E., a seemingly sensible surmise: the assertion that, in the wake of the Temple’s destruction, large numbers of Jews would have been driven to abandon Judaism altogether.<sup>1</sup>

In response to claims of post-destruction mass desertion, I say this: Name two.

Of course, the fact that we can’t name any such apostates doesn’t—on its own—prove anything. It illustrates the larger problem we face: We just don’t know how the surviving Jews reacted to their trauma. The closest thing we have to a survivor’s testimony is Josephus, but he didn’t suffer the worst

of it, for he was safely on the Roman side before the siege of Jerusalem. Yet he was on the Roman side only to a point: By all accounts, Josephus did not abandon Judaism. Josephus’s *magnum opus*, a massive history of Judaism from creation to his own day titled *Antiquities of the Jews*, begins and ends with assertions of God’s just care for the world and, in return, Jewish obligations back to God (1.1–23; 20.268). Even toward the end of his life, Josephus’s final completed work was an extended defense of Judaism—its beliefs and practices—against the calumnies of his Roman contemporaries (*Against Apion*). So we have the account of just one bona-fide survivor, and he didn’t lose faith.

Josephus’s loyalty does not prove that most surviving Jews remained committed to Jewish practice, belief or peoplehood. But it does point to the disparity between claims of mass apostasy and the lack of evidence to support such a claim. So the question isn’t really whether there was or wasn’t mass apostasy—for this cannot be known. The question is really why modern scholars *suppose* there *must have been* mass apostasy, even though we lack concrete evidence.

The reason for this is, I think, clear enough: Scholars who write about mass apostasy in 70 C.E. also speak of a modern crisis of faith, asking, “How to believe in God after such a catastrophe?” And it would not be incorrect to suppose—though we can’t always know for sure—that when modern Jewish scholars are thinking of a crisis of faith in the past, they are thinking of a crisis of faith in the present: the well-known presumption, held by many, that it remains a challenge for thinking people to believe in God after Auschwitz.

This is too big a question for a short column. It is, in fact, too big a question for a long column. But we don’t have to address this question head on. We can just wonder whether the modern predicament is at all relevant to an understanding of the ancient past.

How would ancient Jews have reacted to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.? The question, so phrased, answers itself: just as they did to the destruction of the *First Temple*. The modern theological crisis—for those who have one—is usually based on the idea that the events of the mid-20th century were so uniquely gruesome that the old paradigms can no longer hold. Perhaps that is true (though it should be said that plenty of people

CONTINUES ON PAGE 78



# Not getting the sleep you need?

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## Alternate Altars

Casey Sharp

MANY MODERN READERS TEND TO SKIM OR outright skip the Torah's long sections of law concerning ritual sacrifice. Their apathy is understandable. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., the focal point of ancient Judaism shifted from ritual sacrifice to the study of the Torah, and the era of the Talmud allowed Judaism to adapt and survive without the centerpiece of worship and sacrifice in Jerusalem. But with the rise of modern critical Biblical study and the excavation of religious centers, such as Tel Dan in northern Israel, a renewed interest in the sacrificial laws and what they reveal about ancient Israelite religion has developed. At the forefront of this renewed interest are altars and how the remains from the ground match the descriptions found in the Bible.

A number of Iron Age temples and religious spaces that functioned at the time of the First Temple have been excavated. This seems contrary to the Bible's requirement of centralized worship and sacrifice only at the Jerusalem Temple (see, e.g., Deuteronomy 12:2–27), but we should remember that the Bible's laws present the ideal practices of ancient Israelite religion. Actual practice may have been very different. At Tel Dan in northern Israel, excavators found evidence of a very large sacrificial altar made of carved stones with four “horns” protruding from the four corners on top of the altar. These “horns” appear to be a decorative motif unique to altars from David's time until the Babylonian Exile. The northern cities of Gezer, Shiloh, Shechem, Dothan, Kedesh and Megiddo have all revealed smaller carved-stone altars, most of which have four horns.

Archaeologists have long noted the connection between these Iron Age four-horned carved-stone altars and the description of the Tabernacle's four-horned altar in Exodus 27:1–8, as well as references to the four-horned altar at the First Temple in the Books of Kings and Chronicles.

At Beer-Sheva, Israeli archaeologist Yohanan Aharoni found three large carved stones that appeared to be the three corners of a massive four-horned altar. The excavators reconstructed this sacrificial altar and theorized that it was dismantled during the religious reforms of King Hezekiah in the late eighth century B.C.E. (2 Kings 18). This

reconstructed altar now sits at the entrance to the archaeology wing of the Israel Museum. However, the carved stones were found inside a later wall, which obscures their original place, function and date.

Aharoni's team also excavated the most well known Iron Age temple in Judah outside of Jerusalem itself: the Arad temple. In the Negev south of Jerusalem, Arad contained a very different sacrificial altar than what archaeologists have reconstructed at Dan and Beer-Sheva. The central sacrificial altar at Arad was made of uncut field stones and packed earth. This is the other type of altar described in the Bible: “the earthen altar” (Exodus 20:24–26 and Deuteronomy 27:1–8). The Bible states that this kind of sacrificial altar should be made of uncut fieldstones and dirt. The laws in Deuteronomy specifically bar any contact between the altar and iron implements. When compared to the four-horned altar, these altars are a simple construction. The Arad temple also contained two carved-stone incense altars *without* horns. Most smaller-sized altars are probably incense altars.

Recently, archaeologists have found another Iron Age earthen altar in a sacred area at Tel Motza just outside of Jerusalem. This further illustrates the fact that ancient Judahites sacrificed at sites other than the First Temple itself—even near Jerusalem.

From the period after the Assyrian conquest and destruction of the northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.E., stone four-horned altars were found mostly in Philistia. Ekron, Ashkelon, Timnah and Yavneh all reveal carved-stone altars, most dated around the seventh century B.C.E. Former Director of the Albright Institute Seymour Gitin proposes that the four-horned altar was brought to Philistia by northern Israelites who were forced to resettle there after the Assyrian conquest. Regardless of the artistic origins of the Iron Age four-horned altar or the simple earthen altar, their descriptions in the Bible do match the archaeological remains. The altars uncovered in this archaeological context reveal religious differences between the northern and southern kingdoms in Israel (and Philistia). They also show us a point of tension between the sources of the Bible and their respective visions for

CONTINUES ON PAGE 78



**A four-horned altar or an earthen altar? That is the question. Or is it?**



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# Searching for Cana

## Where Jesus Turned Water into Wine

Tom McCollough

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

(John 2:1-11, NRSV)

**LESS WELL KNOWN, JESUS HEALED A YOUNG BOY’S FEVER IN Cana (John 4:46–54). And the disciple Nathanael came from Cana (John 21:2).**

So where is Cana?

At least five sites have been proposed as the place where Jesus turned water into wine, his first miracle and first attestation to his divine status.

I believe we have found it and are excavating New Testament “Cana of Galilee.”<sup>1</sup>

**PREVIOUS PAGES:** Jesus performs his first miracle in the Gospel of John at a wedding in Cana of Galilee when the wedding party runs out of wine. As seen in this mid-12th-century painting from the ceiling of the Church of St. Martin Zillis in Grisons, Switzerland, Jesus has servants fill six stone jars with water. When the chief steward of the wedding is offered a cup from these jars, he discovers that he is tasting wine.

I admit that we have not discovered a first-century Aramaic inscription reading, “You are entering Cana,” but we seldom have that degree of assurance in archaeology. What I can say is that all signs point in this direction.

Khirbet Cana (“the ruins of Cana”), a bare 8.5 miles from Nazareth (and, equally important, 5 mi northeast of Sepphoris) in lower Galilee, has long been identified as New Testament Cana, although not without question. Our work here, however, has served to confirm this traditional identification.

Khirbet Cana is situated on a limestone outcropping that rises 330 feet above the floor of the Bet Netofa Valley. In antiquity, the village was located

**WHERE IS CANA OF GALILEE?** At least five candidates have been proposed. Author Tom McCollough believes he has found it at Khirbet Cana (“the ruins of Cana”), almost 9 miles from Nazareth in lower Galilee, where he has codirected the excavation since 2008. Below we see Khirbet Cana overlooking Bet Netofa Valley. In antiquity, the village sat at an important juncture of Roman roads connecting Tarichaea (Magdala) on the Sea of Galilee with Ptolemais (Akko) on the Mediterranean coast.



at an important junction of Roman roads connecting Tarichaea on the Sea of Galilee with Ptolemais (Akko) on the Mediterranean coast.<sup>2</sup>

Architectural remains at the site go back to the Hellenistic period (323–166 B.C.E.). In the Maccabean period (166–40 B.C.E.) and in the Roman period (40 B.C.E.–324 C.E.), Khirbet Cana was a vibrant Jewish village interconnected with other Jewish villages in lower Galilee. Its Jewish identity is based primarily on numismatic and architectural indicators. The coins recovered in the Hellenistic and Roman occupation strata clearly point to a Jewish population. As noted by Israeli numismatist Danny Syon, “[T]he six Maccabean coins are by



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**IDENTIFYING IDENTITY.** Several archaeological discoveries attest to the Jewish identity of Khirbet Cana from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Among the evidence is a late first- or early second-century C.E. building (above) with two rows of columns, benches along the sides and plastered floors and walls—features that suggest the building was a synagogue. Several *miqva'ot* (ritual baths, upper left) dating to the same period as the synagogue were also uncovered. A second-century C.E. ostrakon (lower left) discovered at the site has been identified as an abecedary. Its incised letters read, from right to left, *beth, gimal, dalet*.

correlate very strongly with structures built in this period and identified as synagogues.\* Roman-period synagogues typically served a variety of communal needs and were not dedicated solely to prayer or the study of Torah. From this same period we also found several stepped pools identified as *miqva'ot* (Jewish ritual baths).

Numerous fragments of stone vessels also indicate the inhabitants were Jewish because stone vessels were not subject to impurity according to Jewish law and were therefore common among Jews at this time.

Finally, an ostrakon incised with the Hebrew script has been identified as an abecedary and dates to the second century C.E.

This combination of material evidence, along with the site's location amid other villages identified as Jewish, make a strong case for claiming that Khirbet Cana was a modest-sized Jewish village in the lower Galilee from the Hellenistic period onward (c. 200 B.C.E.–650 C.E.).

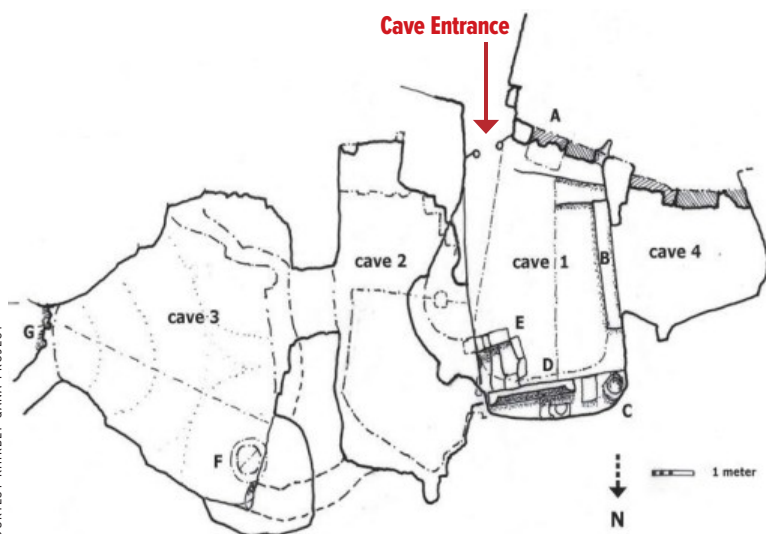


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themselves sufficient evidence of a Jewish presence at Qana in this period, as these coins were in use almost exclusively by Jews.”<sup>3</sup>

Several structures have also led to the conclusion that this was a Jewish village in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. A large building (about 65 by 48 ft) on the acropolis from the late first- or early second-century C.E.<sup>4</sup> had two rows of interior columns, benches along the sides and finely plastered floors and walls. These architectural features

\*Rachel Hachlili, “Synagogues—Before and After the Roman Destruction of the Temple,” *BAR*, May/June 2015.



Perhaps the most explicit identification of Khirbet Cana with New Testament Cana comes from a fascinating cave complex we discovered on the south slope of the site. At the end of our first excavation season, somewhat by accident (as is so often the case in archaeology), we came upon an opening to a cave at the base of a fig tree. While the cave was largely filled with dirt and with sheep and goat dung, we could nevertheless see plaster on the walls and faint traces of Greek graffiti.

The excavated cave was roughly circular, approximately 20 feet in diameter, 8 feet high at the center point and oriented east-west. The interior was covered with several layers of plaster. The Greek graffiti, when we could make them out, read “Kyrie Iesou”

**VENERATION BELOW.** A cave complex on the south slope of the site—found by accident at the end of the first excavation season—solidifies Khirbet Cana’s identification as the New Testament Cana, according to author McCollough. The opening of the cave complex (upper left), which lay at the base of a fig tree, revealed a first cave covered with layers of plaster dating from the Byzantine through the Crusader periods (415–1217 C.E.). While only the first cave has been excavated, archaeologists discovered that the cave was part of a larger complex of at least four interconnected caves. The entire complex has been explored and drawn (lower left) but not yet excavated.

(“Lord Jesus ... [enter ... deign to ...]” and such), written on the ceiling and walls.

Excavation of a portion of the floor exposed three layers of lime plaster, indicating it was an important cave when laid, dating from the Byzantine period (415–654 C.E.) through the Crusader period (1024–1217 C.E.).

On the western side of the cave was a bench that could seat eight to ten people. On the eastern side was an apse-like curve that was blocked with a reused sarcophagus lid turned on its side, which served as a kind of altar.<sup>5</sup> It was covered with several layers of plaster and bore a chiseled Maltese-style cross on the side facing visitors. Further investigation of the lid-now-turned-altar revealed three more crosses. Carbon-14 tests of the plaster in which the crosses were incised date it to the fifth–sixth centuries; the crosses would appear to date from the same period.

The top edge of the sarcophagus lid was worn smooth, suggesting that pilgrims placed their hands on top while praying.

Above the sarcophagus lid/altar was a shelf to hold stone vessels, two of which were found *in situ*. There was space for another four. Six stone jars would have held the water that Jesus turned into wine (John 2:6). All this suggests that Khirbet Cana was regarded as New Testament Cana from a very early time.

Directly above this altar, holes were cut into the cave walls, apparently as beam holes to hang a curtain or some other apparatus to segregate the altar area.

In the narrow area between the altar and the cave wall, we discovered two small pieces of marble, both decorated with gold leaf, one with an acanthus leaf design (see p. 36). The plaster attached to it suggests that it was part of a marble wall panel. In the same location and in the same strata of soil, a griffin covered in gold leaf was discovered. The griffin has a spike attached to it, suggesting that it was part of a lavish piece of furniture. In the Crusader level of fill, we found a large round piece of clear window





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**PILGRIM WORSHIP.** It's clear that the caves at Cana formed a major Christian underground veneration complex. Graffiti (lower right) scrawled on the wall of the first cave depict crosses and possibly a name of a visiting pilgrim. On the eastern side of the cave, a sarcophagus lid had been turned on its side, serving as a kind of altar (see above and architect's rendering, lower left). The fifth–sixth-century lid was covered in plaster and featured Maltese-style crosses. The lid's top edge was worn, perhaps from pilgrims placing their hands on it while praying. Above this altar was a shelf with two stone vessels found *in situ*. There was space for four more jars, suggesting that the vessels represented the six stone jars that held the water Jesus turned into wine.



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**CAVE DÉCOR.** Two small pieces of marble decorated with gold leaf were found between the altar and the cave wall: one with an acanthus leaf design (left) and one depicting a griffin (above). Both bore remnants of plaster, indicating the pieces were part of the same marble wall panel.

glass that may have been associated with the viewing of relics.

This cave, which we labeled Cave 1, was in fact part of a much larger complex of four (or possibly more) interconnected caves that have been explored and drawn but not excavated. This is enough, however, to indicate that there was an ambulatory or processional entering the caves at one end and exiting at the other.

These caves at Khirbet Cana were no doubt a major Christian underground veneration complex, similar to and as intricate as the underground passages in Bethlehem associated with the Church of the Holy Nativity.

The shrine at Khirbet Cana was obviously constructed in the belief from a very early time that this was the Cana where Jesus had turned water into wine.

Immediately to the south of the cave opening at Khirbet Cana are remnants of an Arab village in which we recovered a section of a marble column drum, part of a limestone chancel screen and a portion of a monumental wall about 4.5 feet wide, indicating that a church and perhaps a monastery were also associated with the cave shrine. It is hardly surprising that a holy site with a veneration complex would also have a monastery and a church attached to it.

Pilgrims' reports from the Byzantine and Medieval periods offer another line of evidence in identifying Khirbet Cana as the site referred to in the Gospel of John. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the Empress Eudocia and Emperors Anastasius and Justinian made generous imperial donations to churches and monastic foundations. This encouraged a real hunger

for a tactile experience of the Holy Land to worship and receive blessings "where his feet had stood." This resulted in a far richer collection of relevant texts in the form of guidebooks and pilgrim diaries.

A guidebook titled *The Layout of the Holy Land*, composed between 517 and 527 C.E. and attributed to a certain Theodosius,<sup>6</sup> describes a Christian pilgrim route from Jerusalem west to Jaffa, then north along the coast to Caesarea, then east to Diocaesarea (Sepphoris) and "from Diocaesarea it is five miles to Cana of Galilee"<sup>7</sup>—the precise location of Khirbet Cana.

A more vivid and effusive account from about 570 C.E. comes from the so-called anonymous Pilgrim of Piacenza. He locates "Cana where the Lord attended the wedding" 3 miles from Sepphoris, a clear indication that in his mind Cana was Khirbet Cana.

There, he tells us, "We actually reclined on the couch. On it (undeserving though I am) I wrote the names of my parents ... Of the waterpots, two are still there, and I filled one of them up with wine and lifted it up full on to my shoulders. I offered it at the altar, and we washed in the spring to gain a blessing. We [then] traveled on to the city of Nazareth."

This account is helpful not only in its topographical details but also in its description of the site. Moreover, the route followed is what would be expected in terms of our knowledge of the roads used by Byzantine pilgrims. The road from Ptolemais (Akko) to Diocaesarea (Sepphoris) was the main road through lower Galilee, and from there it would be easy to travel the short 3 to 5 miles north across the valley to Khirbet Cana before turning southwest to Nazareth.



A number of references to Cana in pilgrim texts dating to the period of the Crusades are significant in terms of the site's location. One of the most interesting was written by the Anglo-Saxon (possibly German) Saewulf (1101–1103 C.E.), who reports, "Six miles to the north of Nazareth is Cana of Galilee, where the Lord at the wedding changed the water into wine."<sup>8</sup>

Similar locations are indicated by Belard of Ascoli (c. 1155 C.E.) and Burchard of Mount Sion (1282 C.E.).<sup>9</sup> Belard of Ascoli provides the first explicit reference to the use of a cave as part of the veneration complex: "The hamlet of Cana is situated between Nazareth and Tiberias. The place of the wedding is a cave dug out in rock, which would take about fifty men."<sup>10</sup> This observation dovetails well with the archaeological finds at Khirbet Cana.

The Dominican friar Burchard of Mount Sion places Sepphoris “two leagues to the south of Cana

of Galilee.”<sup>11</sup> He too mentions the veneration site: “The place is shown at this day where the six water pots stood, and the dining-room where the tables were placed.”

These Crusader-period texts clearly indicate that Khirbet Cana was the established location of Cana of Galilee for visiting pilgrims. It is noteworthy that the texts make reference to a monastery as well as the cave complex.

Early maps also confirm Khirbet Cana as New Testament Cana. They consistently locate Cana of Galilee north or west of Sepphoris. One of the earliest maps to attempt to render the land of Palestine with some accuracy was included in Marino Sanuto's *Book of Secrets of the Faithful to the Cross on the Recovery and Protection of the Holy Land*. Sanuto, a Venetian nobleman, composed the work in 1321 and presented it to the Pope in the hope of inspiring him to mount a new crusade to the Holy Land. The book included several maps drawn by Petrus Vesconte, a cartographer of some note. Vesconte's map of the Holy Land for the first time depicts relative directions and distances between sites.<sup>12</sup> Vesconte locates Cana of Galilee directly north of Sepphoris in line

**MEDIEVAL HOLY LAND MAPS** locate Cana of Galilee north and sometimes west of Sepphoris. Fifteenth-century English priest William Wey created this map showing Cana of Galilee, depicted with six water jugs, north of Sepphoris.





**CANA CONTENDER.** Several other sites have been proposed as New Testament Cana, from Kefar Kenna, 3 miles northeast of Nazareth, to Qana al-Jalil in modern-day Lebanon. The highlight of the Lebanese Cana, identified as the New Testament Cana by fourth-century historian Eusebius and still regarded as the true site today by many Lebanese Christians, is a cave bearing a bas-relief of Jesus and the apostles (above) and other early Christian rock carvings. Galilean Khirbet Cana, however, best fits the geographical descriptions from Byzantine- and Crusader-period guidebooks and texts and has yielded archaeological evidence for its long history as a pilgrimage site.

with Khirbet Cana. He also identifies Nazareth on the map in its proper relationship to Sepphoris, that is, 3 miles to the southeast.

The Medieval Holy Land mapmakers thereafter continue to locate Cana of Galilee either north or west of Sepphoris. For example, the lithographic facsimile of the map that William Wey produced in 1462 shows Cana of Galilee directly north of Sepphoris (see p. 37). Cana's identification is accompanied by a drawing of six water jugs that mark Jesus' miracle, indicating that the map was likely for pilgrim use.<sup>13</sup>

The first time another site is associated with New Testament Cana arises in a mid-17th-century report to the Pope by the papal emissary to Palestine, Francesco Quaresimo. He noted that in his time there were two candidates: Khirbet Cana and Kefar Kenna. The identification of a second site appears to be the result of the decline of Khirbet Cana beginning

in the Mamluk period, reflected in the archaeological evidence. Moreover, 16th-century Ottoman tax records indicate that there were only 25 males in Khirbet Cana, three unmarried. This compares with about 600 villagers in the new possibility, a site with a similar name—Kefar Kenna, located, we are told, about 4 miles from Nazareth. It was a common practice, especially among the Franciscans in the late Medieval and Ottoman periods, to accommodate increases in pilgrim traffic by establishing new (and more well-to-do and easily accessible) sites as the authentic ones for sites associated with New Testament references to Jesus in Jerusalem.\* No doubt they did this elsewhere as well.

The alternative site of Kefar Kenna (also known as Kafr Kanna) is the site most often visited as Cana of Galilee by tourists today. It is a large village 3 miles northeast of Nazareth. Recent archaeo-

logical work in the Franciscan church at the site has uncovered some stone vessels, Herodian-type lamp fragments and other artifacts that may suggest a first-century occupation.<sup>14</sup> Evidence of an ongoing Jewish presence is represented by a synagogue mosaic fragment dating to the third or fourth century with an Aramaic inscription. What is missing, however, is any archaeological evidence that the site was venerated by Christian pilgrims before the church complex was built at the site in the 19th century. Although there is a 17th-century reference to this site as a possible contender for Cana pilgrimage, there is no significant pilgrimage link until the 19th century. This weighs heavily against its identification as the New Testament Cana of Galilee.

Still another contender is Karm er-Ras, located immediately north of Kefar Kenna. A recent salvage excavation at the site led by Israeli archaeologist Yardenna Alexandre has convinced her that Karm er-Ras is "the original ancient village of Cana."<sup>15</sup> This conclusion she regards as "apparent." A substantial Roman village had clear evidence of a Jewish population: *Miqvaot* were exposed in association with houses and limestone vessels. The village declined significantly in the Late Roman period (135–324 C.E.) and was abandoned at the beginning of the Byzantine era. Alexandre suggests that this explains why pilgrimage subsequently shifted to the nearby site of Kefar Kenna in the Byzantine period.

\*Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The Geography of Faith," *Bible Review*, December 1996.



Although it is undoubtedly true that the site was a Jewish village in the Roman period, that is as far as the evidence takes us.


Alexandre suggests that a reference to Cana by first-century Jewish historian Josephus can be identified with her site. In his *Life*, Josephus recounts that when he was the commander of the Jewish forces in Galilee during the Jewish revolt against Rome, he lived for a time in Cana (*Life* 86). But where was the Cana to which Josephus refers? Alexandre argues that it could well be her site of Karm er-Ras. However, Josephus's description of the site correlates with Khirbet Cana rather than Karm er-Ras—or at least that is the view of prominent Josephus scholars who have studied this reference. Thus Steve Mason, a leading Josephus scholar, writes that “Khirbet Qanah ... rises 100 meters above the Bet-Netofa valley on the N edge, about 2.5 km from Iotapata (Yodfat) ... This central location [of Khirbet Cana] in Lower Galilee, with easy access routes, the nearby fortress [Iotapata/Yodfat], and a commanding view of both the main valley and the access to Iotapata, would have made Cana an ideal location for Josephus.”<sup>16</sup>

In short, the only basis for associating Karm er-Ras with Cana of Galilee is its close proximity to Kefar Kenna, another losing contender for New Testament Cana. This seems very thin evidence for associating this site with first-century New Testament “Cana of Galilee.” Moreover, the site has no early association with the Cana miracle story.

Another site in Galilee, Ain Qana (the spring of Cana), is located about a mile north of Nazareth, but no excavations have been conducted here. Some early Christian pilgrim reports mention a spring in association with Cana of Galilee, so the site may have some viability, but in the absence of more substantial data, it is not a serious candidate.

The final contender, strange as it may seem, is Qana al-Jalil (“Cana of Galilee”) in modern-day Lebanon, about 18 miles from Tyre. Stranger still, it is mentioned as Cana in Eusebius's fourth-century *Onomasticon*. He cites this Cana in addition to the one in Galilee. Nevertheless, Eusebius regards the Lebanese Cana as the one where the water-to-wine miracle occurred. And this identification continues in a few texts and maps into the Medieval period.<sup>17</sup> To this day, many Lebanese Christians regard the Lebanese Cana as the site of Jesus' first miracle. It is, in times of peace, a popular tourist site commemorating the miracle.

In conclusion, however, Khirbet Cana remains the best candidate for the location of Cana, where Christian tradition locates Jesus' first miracle. It is the one site identified by pilgrims as Cana of Galilee before the 17th century. Moreover, the guidebooks

and texts produced by Christian pilgrims from the Byzantine period through the Crusader period offer not only strong topographical indicators of Khirbet Cana as the location of Cana of Galilee, but also a description of a veneration complex that correlates strikingly with the impressive cave complex exposed at Khirbet Cana. Together this evidence supports the scholarly consensus that the site we are excavating is indeed “Cana of Galilee.” 

<sup>1</sup> The excavations of Khirbet Cana were initiated by the late Douglas Edwards (University of Puget Sound) in 1998. I joined the excavations in 2000 as field director and in 2008 became the codirector. Doug published several articles on Khirbet Cana and was working on a comprehensive report on the excavations when he died of cancer in the fall of 2008.

<sup>2</sup> See James Strange, “Cana of Galilee,” in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 827.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas Edwards, “Khirbet Qana: From Jewish Village to Christian Pilgrim Site,” in John H. Humphrey, ed., *The Roman and Byzantine Near East*, vol. 3., Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 49 (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2002), p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> Our ceramic evidence from the foundation strata of the building date founding to the early Roman period and carbon-14 dating of the mortar from foundation stones date founding to C.E. 4–224 (95% accuracy).

<sup>5</sup> We have identified the sarcophagus lid with incised crosses as “a kind of an altar,” as it appears to have been intentionally set in place to invite pilgrims to approach it and perhaps to interact in some way with the stone vessels in place behind the lid. We contend that the placement and decoration of the make-shift altar constitutes some type of liturgical action in the cave setting.

<sup>6</sup> Translation of text in John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, Ltd., 2002), pp. 103–116. See also Yoram Tsafrir, “The Maps Used by Theodosius: On the Pilgrim Maps of the Holy Land and Jerusalem in the Sixth Century C.E.,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 40 (1986), pp. 129–145.

<sup>7</sup> Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, p. 105.

<sup>8</sup> John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage: 1099–1185* (London: the Hakluyt Society, 1988), p. 111.

<sup>9</sup> See the discussion of Crusader-era pilgrimage and texts in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*.

<sup>10</sup> Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, p. 231.

<sup>11</sup> Text cited in Peter Richardson, “What Has Cana to Do with Capernaum?” *New Testament Studies* 48 (2002), pp. 314–331.

<sup>12</sup> Milka Levy-Rubin, “Marino Sanuto and Petrus Vesconte,” in Ariel Tishby, ed., *The Holy Land in Maps* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum and Rizzoli International Publications, 2001), p. 74.

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps the most famous cartographer of the 16th century, Gerardus Mercator published a map of the Holy Land in 1585 and located Cana of Galilee northwest of Sepphoris with Nazareth to the southeast, as one would find it today. A richly illustrated early 17th-century map produced by the Englishman Thomas Fuller follows this pattern and illumines Cana of Galilee with a church or monastery enclosed by a wall.

<sup>14</sup> Eugenio Alliata, “I recenti scavi a Kefer Kenna,” *La Terra Sancta* 1 (1999), pp. 16–17.

<sup>15</sup> Yardenna Alexandre, “The Archaeological Evidence of the Great Revolt at Karm er-Ras (Kafr Kanna) in the Lower Galilee,” in Ofra Guri-Rimon, ed., *The Great Revolt in the Galilee* (Haifa: Hecht Museum, University of Haifa, 2008), pp. 73–80.

<sup>16</sup> Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, vol. 9, *Life of Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 69.

<sup>17</sup> *Onomasticon* 116, in Joan Taylor, ed., *The Onomasticon of Eusebius of Caesarea*, trans. by Greville Stewart Parker Freeman-Grenville (Jerusalem: Carta, 2003).







# Pan at Hippos

## Face of Greek God Unearthed

By Michael Eisenberg

**“YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A FIND!”** yelled Alexander Iermolin at Antiochia Hippos (Sussita),\* located a thousand feet above the Sea of Galilee. A group of 15 of us were excavating the site’s outworks in November 2014.

We hurried over as Alexander pulled out a large piece of metal covered in dirt near one of the basalt tower walls. After a few seconds, we realized that we were looking at a face. We removed some dirt from the metal and recognized a large bronze mask of the Greek god Pan (Faunus in the Roman pantheon) or possibly a satyr (a mythological creature resembling a man with equine or goat-like

features). The face stared back at us with glazed, furious—almost tragic—eyes and a gaping mouth.

We marveled at the size of the mask—and its quality. Perhaps we should not have been surprised, however, because Hippos was a flourishing *polis* of the Decapolis during the Roman period.

Located east of the Sea of Galilee on the crest of Sussita Mountain, Hippos was founded around the middle of the second century B.C.E. by the Seleucids. The Greeks named the site Antiochia Hippos (“hippos” is Greek for “horse”).

Hippos was conquered by the Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus in 101 B.C.E., but the tide shifted again in 64 B.C.E. when the region fell under Roman control. Hippos became a Decapolis city, one of ten administrative Greco-Roman cities that had internal autonomy and jurisdiction over a large area in what is now Jordan, Israel and Syria. At that time, a pagan population and a Jewish minority lived at the site. When Hippos later became part of the domain of Herod the Great, it remained a primarily pagan city.

During the First Jewish Revolt against Rome, Jews from the western side of the lake, from

\*Michael Eisenberg and Arthur Segal, “The Spade Hits Sussita,” *BAR*, May/June 2006; Vassilios Tzaferis, “Sussita Awaits the Spade,” *BAR*, September/October 1990; Hershel Shanks, “Archaeological High Horse,” *BAR*, November/December 2014.

**FACE OF PAN.** The bronze mask uncovered at Hippos depicts a young man—most likely Pan or the Roman god Faunus—with small horns on his head, a forelock, long pointed ears and strands of a goat beard. With a gaping mouth and glazed, furious eyes, he stares out at the passing world. Here the mask is shown after its full conservation treatment.



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Tiberias and around, came to the eastern side, torching and devastating Hippos's region, but they could not take the fortified city itself. Hippos's Jewish minority was imprisoned and sold into slavery.

Hippos remained predominantly pagan until the fourth century C.E., when it became a Christian city; by the mid-fourth century, it had become a bishop's seat.\* At least seven Byzantine churches were built in Hippos, five of which have been partially or fully excavated.

In 636 C.E., the region was conquered by the Early Islamic forces, and it began diminishing in importance.

Hippos was destroyed—never to be resettled—after the devastating earthquake of January 18, 749 C.E. This catastrophe, together with the isolated location of Hippos on the crest, preserved the site exceptionally well for 21st-century archaeologists.

The scarce historical sources dealing with Hippos and the archaeological remains exposed so far provide a glimpse into the daily lives and religion of the site's inhabitants. Pagans,

\*Michael Eisenberg and Arthur Segal, "Hercules in Galilee," *BAR*, November/December 2011.

**SUSSITA'S SADDLE RIDGE.** As seen from the east toward the saddle ridge and the crest, the Sussita Mountain overlooks the Sea of Galilee. Antiochia Hippos (Sussita) boasts archaeological remains from the Hellenistic through Islamic periods. The mausoleum, the ditch and the new area of excavations are marked above.

Christians, Jews and Muslims all left their marks on the stones of the city.

Which pagan gods did Hippos's inhabitants worship? The remains of a Roman temple inside the

Hellenistic compound were probably for Tyche (Fortuna), the city's protector, who is known from the



**DECAPOLIS CITIES.** During the Roman period, Hippos was one of ten Decapolis cities that governed one of Rome's eastern provinces. It had jurisdiction over its surrounding area and internal autonomy. The other Decapolis cities are situated in modern Israel, Jordan and Syria.





TODD BOLEN/BIBLEPLACES.COM

numismatic evidence and a fresco found at the site. On the highest area of the crest in the southeast, several architectural fragments of a monumental building have been found and are perhaps remnants of a temple to Zeus. From coins minted at Hippos, we know that a temple for Zeus of the mountains existed at Hippos, and normally temples to Zeus were located on the highest area. The bronze mask of the Greek god Pan may suggest that Pan or his companion Dionysus was also worshiped here.

Pan, the rustic Greek god of the wild, shepherds and music, is often depicted as half goat and half man. He was worshiped at least as early as the fifth century B.C.E. in Arcadia (Greece), which was the focal point of his cult. His name comes from old Arcadian, meaning “to pasture.” Pan later became a popular god in the east, often appearing as part of the Dionysian procession. His main attributes are the syrinx (Pan flute) and the pedom (shepherd’s crook). He is frequently described as chasing and lusting after nymphs. Pan is also associated with love of the countryside and the pursuit of rustic simplicity, which explains why he was worshiped mainly in open fields, caves or grottoes.

As with many Greek gods, the Romans adopted Pan into their own pantheon, syncretizing him with the Roman god Faunus, the rustic god of the forests.

**EARTHQUAKE EVIDENCE.** A devastating earthquake on January 18, 749 C.E. destroyed the site of Hippos. All of the columns in the South Church toppled off their bases in a neat row (seen above). After this tragedy, Hippos was abandoned and never resettled.

Faunus, Pan and satyri appear in various mythological tales and are among the most popularly depicted subjects in Classical art.

Sussita Mountain is surrounded by three riverbeds cutting it off on all sides, except the southeast, where a saddle ridge connects the crest with its surroundings. Naturally the main road to the city was built here, since it was the most accessible, but also the most vulnerable, area. The inhabitants sought to protect it with fortifications and a defensive ditch—26 feet wide—which cuts through the middle of the saddle ridge and has fortification walls on either side.

While surveying this area, we identified a basalt fortification wall running along the northwestern part of the saddle ridge in the direction of the bastion (a Roman period artillery post) in the middle of the southern cliff. A series of four basalt structures was located near this fortification wall, beneath the main defense ditch.

We initiated the excavation on the southernmost

structure of the hangars that housed projectiles, *ballistae* and catapults alike. After a few excavation days, a large, round tower—apparently part of a bathhouse—was partially exposed. We have not reached its foundations yet, but in its fill we located a fragment of a ballista ball. It was not the first ballista ball to be found at Hippos, but unlike the usual basalt ballista balls, this ball was made of hard limestone—not of the local basalt. It is likely that the ball was brought and shot by an enemy *ballistae* machine toward the saddle ridge fortifications and broke on impact.

About 100 feet south of the round tower, we started clearing another basalt structure, set beneath the ditch. Its 6.5-foot-wide exterior walls, built of fine basalt ashlar, made it a promising candidate for a corner defense tower connected to the fortifications on the saddle ridge. It was here that our institute's head conservator, Dr. Alexander Iermolin, was operating the metal detector during surface clearing when he discovered the Pan mask beside one of the basalt tower walls.

Following further excavations at the basalt tower, we exposed a pressed earth floor, above which the mask was found. The floor was dated to the first

century C.E., but the mask was not found here *in situ*.

Before cleaning or conserving the mask, we had it scanned via radiography by Izhak Hershko and Dan Breitman of the Department of Radiography at the Soreq Nuclear Research Center. After verifying that there were no flaws in the original cast and no severe trauma or corrosion, Alexander began the conservation treatment at the Zinman Institute of Archaeology. The process is basically a mechanical one—cleaning inch by inch under a microscope while documenting each stage.

During the first phase of conservation, we cleaned one half of the front of the mask. After checking the results, we moved to the other half. In the final phase of conservation, we stabilized the metal and applied patina to the front of the mask. The back of the mask is rough and was never intended to

**BASALT TOWER.** This photograph shows the basalt tower where the Pan mask was discovered—with Dr. Iermolin sitting on one of its corners. With 6.5-foot thick exterior walls, it served as a corner defense tower and was connected to the fortifications on Hippos's saddle ridge. The mask was uncovered near one of the tower's walls. It rested above a pressed earth floor, which has been dated to the first century C.E. Hippos itself is at the upper left.



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**GODDESS OF FORTUNE.** This fresco fragment from Hippos depicts Tyche, the Greek goddess of fortune—or Fortuna in the Roman pantheon. Tyche was the city's protector. The fresco was discovered on a plastered limestone block in the Peristyle House, which has been subsequently renamed the House of Tyche.

be seen. Traces of lead visible on the rear make it clear that the mask was installed from the back, so we decided to leave the rear alone and merely stabilize it.

Within several months the conservation treatment was complete, enabling us to analyze the mask in detail, assisted by photogrammetry techniques conducted by Eli Gerstein, head of the Photogrammetry Lab at the Zinman Institute and XRF (X-Ray Fluorescence) analysis by Professor Sarel Shalev of the Institute.

Made of well-cast bronze, the mask is almost perfectly preserved, weighing just above 11 pounds and measuring almost 12 inches high and nearly as wide. It portrays a young man with small horns on top of his head, slightly hidden by a forelock. He has strands of a goat beard (of which only one has survived) and long pointed ears.

Similar masks—perhaps influenced by the style of theater masks—are known from the Hellenistic and Roman world, but all of these are made of stone and



M. EISENBERG

**PARTIALLY CONSERVED.** Here the Pan mask is shown after being halfway cleaned. The difference between the two sides is striking, with the cleaned portion (on the left) sparkling in comparison to the other. After the conservators checked the results of this cleaning, they cleaned and stabilized the rest of the mask.

were never intended to be worn as actual masks.

Several sculptures depicting a similar portraiture as our mask, dated to the first–second centuries C.E., are made of marble and bronze. They are generally referred to as satyri and sometimes as Pans/Fauns. Their common characteristic is the young face, sometimes furious and sometimes mischievous; they often bear two small horns on their foreheads and long pointed ears.

The mask from Hippos bears all these features, but in addition it includes strands of a goat beard. Such features make it easy to identify the mask as depicting the Greek god Pan or, more likely, his Roman counterpart, Faunus—and not just a generic depiction of a satyr.

The Hippos mask should be dated to the first–second centuries C.E.

Although we have identified who the mask represents, we still are not certain about its function. Its weight, material and solid eyes made it

CONTINUES ON PAGE 72



# Missing Link in Hebrew Bible Formation

Paul Sanders

**NEW ANALYSIS OF A PREVIOUSLY KNOWN** scrap of a Biblical text provides fascinating insight into the formation of the Hebrew Bible. Known as the Ashkar-Gilson Hebrew Manuscript #2, the text is a remnant of a Torah scroll from the seventh or eighth century C.E. and contains a crucial section of the Book of Exodus.

Although the fragment came to light more than three decades ago, it was disregarded by scholars and remained unpublished. But a recent analysis shows that this damaged sheet fills a gap in our knowledge regarding the transmission of the Biblical text.

The earliest texts of the Hebrew Bible—or the Old Testament, as Christians call it—are found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which include more than 200 Biblical texts ranging from a few words to almost complete books, such as a nearly undamaged copy of the Book of Isaiah (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>).<sup>\*</sup> The dates of these ancient Bible manuscripts range from c. 250 B.C.E. to 115 C.E., so they are much older than the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript. In this early period, the texts were not yet completely fixed; their transmission was still fluid. Copyists made mistakes, wanted to

improve or expand a text, or adapt of certain words.<sup>\*\*</sup> Sometimes the co quite different versions of the same text—for example, the Book of Jeremiah.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Emmanuel Tov, “Searching for the Original Bible: Do the Dead Sea Scrolls Help?” *BAR*, July/August 2014.

**MISSING LINK.** The Hebrew Bible had a long transmission history before it reached its standardized form, as seen in the Aleppo and Leningrad Codices from the 10th and 11th centuries C.E., respectively. While the Dead Sea Scrolls represent much earlier copies of the Hebrew Bible—about two millennia old—they do not comprise a complete copy of the Hebrew Bible, and the Hebrew text of the scrolls was not yet standardized. The Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript (right) is a seventh- or eighth-century C.E. manuscript that sheds light on the formation of the Hebrew Bible in the period between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the later codices; some call this time the “silent era.”

Found in Beirut, Lebanon, by Fuad Ashkar and Albert Gilson in 1972, the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript might have originated in the Cairo Genizah. However, since Ashkar and Gilson purchased the manuscript from an antiquities dealer, the provenance of the piece is not certain. Ashkar and Gilson donated the manuscript to Duke University. Since 2007 Duke has lent the piece to the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, where it is currently stored in the Shrine of the Book.

<sup>\*</sup>Hershel Shanks, “Isaiah among the Scrolls,” *BAR*, July/August 2011; Sidnie White Crawford, “A View from the Caves: Who Put the Scrolls in There?” *BAR*, September/October 2011.





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PHOTO BY BRUCE AND KENNETH ZUCKERMAN, WEST SEMITIC RESEARCH, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ANCIENT BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPT CENTER, COURTESY RUSSIAN NATIONAL LIBRARY

Thus, the Biblical text in the Dead Sea Scrolls is not quite the same as the version that later became official in Judaism and Christianity. The text that is authoritative in present-day Judaism is first found in codices, bound books produced many centuries after the Dead Sea Scrolls. Virtually all modern translations of the Hebrew Bible are based on these relatively late codices.

The earliest Hebrew Bible codices date from only the ninth or tenth century C.E. The authoritative Aleppo Codex (c. 930 C.E., with extensive parts missing since 1947)\* and the well-preserved Leningrad Codex (c. 1008 C.E.)\*\* comprise all the books of the Hebrew Bible. Other codices comprise only a part of the Hebrew Bible, for instance only the Torah (Genesis–Deuteronomy) or only the Prophetic Books (Joshua–Malachi).

These codices were composed by a group of specialists known as Masoretes, who worked in Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, but

**OLDEST COMPLETE HEBREW BIBLE.** The Leningrad Codex dates to 1008 C.E. It is currently stored in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad, hence the name). Prior to arriving at the National Library, the codex was in the possession of Abraham Firkovich, a Karaite collector. Before that, we know only part of the codex's history. In the codex itself are two colophons—one at the beginning of the codex and one at the end—that state that the codex was copied in Cairo by Samuel ben Jacob. Eventually the codex made its way to the Damascus Synagogue. While Firkovich did not specify where he had originally procured the codex, it seems plausible that he acquired it in Damascus.

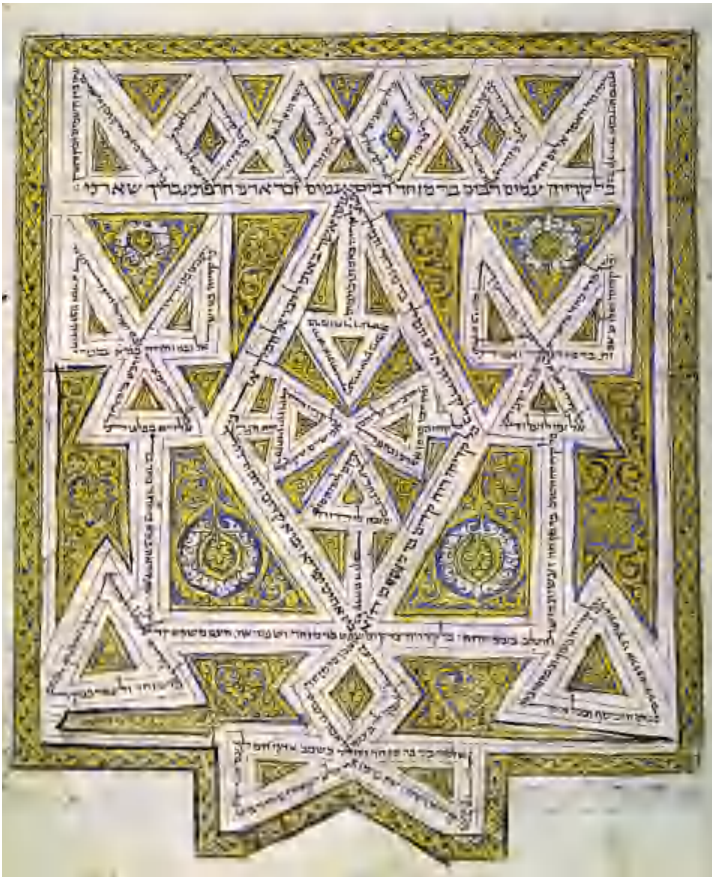
The text of the Leningrad Codex was used as the base for *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, the most recent critical edition of the Hebrew Bible in the *Biblia Hebraica* series. In addition to being authoritative, the codex is beautifully decorated, replete with 16 illuminated carpet pages, such as the one on the opposite page. Interwoven in the designs of the carpet pages are Biblical texts and blessings.

also in some Mesopotamian cities with large Jewish populations. Most of the surviving codices, however, were produced by the Masoretes of Tiberias. They succeeded in their effort to completely stabilize the Biblical text, and their work has remained

\*Yosef Ofer, "The Shattered Crown: The Aleppo Codex, 60 Years after the Riots," *BAR*, September/October 2008; Yosef Ofer, "The Mystery of the Missing Pages of the Aleppo Codex," *BAR*, July/August 2015.

\*\*Astrid Beck and James A. Sanders, "The Leningrad Codex," *Bible Review*, August 1997.





era.” The puzzling question is how the text developed during these enigmatic centuries.

From the “silent era,” there are many manuscripts of Greek, Latin, Syriac and Coptic translations of the Hebrew Bible—but hardly any Biblical texts in the original Hebrew. The prevalent conjecture is that the continuing persecution of the Jews, first by Christians and later by Muslims, led to the destruction of their Hebrew Bible manuscripts. Apparently the Christian persecutors did not realize that the Jewish Bible manuscripts they destroyed might be more accurate than the translations that the Christians used, such as the Greek Septuagint.

Knowledge of developments in the “silent era” has increased significantly, however, with the rediscovery of the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript—which would certainly seem to be an unlikely source. It is a severely damaged and blackened manuscript containing excerpts only from Exodus 13:19–16:1, and it

authoritative to this day.

But the Masoretes even went a step further. To the existing text, which comprised only consonants, they added vowel and accent signs indicating how exactly the text was to be read. They also wrote short (and sometimes longer) notes in the margins to elucidate textual problems and to prevent even the slightest changes.

This version of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Masoretic text, became normative in Judaism—and it still is. The scrolls that since then have been produced for use in synagogues contain exactly the same consonantal text, although the vowel and accent signs are left out because they are not original. Not a single consonant, however, may differ from the normative, Masoretic version found in the earliest codices.

Thus we have a standard text from about the tenth century C.E. and a variety of differing texts (some close to the Masoretic text) from about a millennium earlier (i.e., the Dead Sea Scrolls). But we have almost nothing—just a few scraps—from the centuries in between.<sup>1</sup> The history of the text of the Hebrew Bible is almost blank in this intermediate period. Scholars sometimes refer to it as the “silent

contains only the consonantal text.

In 1972, two American doctors, Fuad Ashkar and Albert Gilson (hence its name), bought the sheet from an antiquities dealer in Beirut. Several years later, Ashkar and Gilson donated it to Duke University. The renowned New Testament scholar James Charlesworth, who was then teaching at Duke University, dated it to between the sixth and eighth centuries C.E. on the basis of a paleographical analysis. His dating was soon narrowed by scientific carbon-14 analyses, showing that the parchment is authentic and dates from the seventh or eighth century C.E.

Since 2007, the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript has

## Who Were the Masoretes?

The Masoretes were groups of Jewish scribes who set up a system to ensure that the text of the Hebrew Bible was transmitted accurately. They lived in communities—the most famous one in Tiberias, Israel—during the sixth through tenth centuries C.E. While the original Hebrew text contained only consonants, the Masoretes added vowel pointings and cantillation marks to the consonantal text to indicate how particular words were pronounced. They also added notes (*masorah*) to explain textual issues and to prevent alterations. The Hebrew text we use today relies on their meticulous work.



A PRIVATE NEW YORK COLLECTION

**BIRDS OF A FEATHER.** The London Manuscript (above) and the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript are both pieces of the same seventh- or eighth-century Torah scroll. This identification was made by Mordechai Mishor and Edna Engel, who saw the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript on display in the Shrine of the Book and recognized its similarities with the better-preserved London Manuscript. The London Manuscript contains Exodus 9:18–13:2, and the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript picks up just a few verses later with Exodus 13:19–16:1. Only one column is lost between the two sheets. The London Manuscript is currently in the possession of New York collector Stephan Loewentheil; it derives its name from the London School of Jewish Studies (formerly Jews' College in London), where the manuscript was once housed.

been on extended loan in the Shrine of the Book of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. However, it will soon return to Duke University, where it will be housed in the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library. While the sheet was on display in the Shrine of the Book, two Israeli experts, Mordechai Mishor and Edna Engel, noticed that the handwriting and layout reminded them of a better-preserved sheet of a Torah scroll, known as the London Manuscript, which contains the text of an earlier passage: Exodus 9:18–13:2. The two scholars had seen a photo of the London Manuscript in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (1968). Strangely enough, the London Manuscript too had been disregarded in

scholarly research. It had been kept in Jews' College in London—hence its name—but had been sold to the New York collector Stephan Loewentheil.

Following some additional research, it was established that the London Manuscript was a remnant of the same Torah scroll as the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript. The two sheets were divided into columns of 42 lines and were written by the same hand. One complete column appears to have been lost between the two sheets. From the size of the surviving sheets it can be inferred that the Torah scroll was originally around 20 inches high.

Although the authenticity of the two fragments is beyond doubt, it is unclear where they came from and how they became separated from each other. One guess is that they came from the famous Cairo Genizah. Although most of the fragments from this hoard—more than 200,000 pieces—ended up in university libraries, some were obtained by antiquities dealers.

In May 2014, I obtained an infrared photo of the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript from the Israel Museum and soon thereafter published the results of my study.<sup>2</sup> Both the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript and the London Manuscript contain the consonantal text of the authoritative Masoretic codices of several centuries later. (Since 1947 the text of Exodus has been missing from the Aleppo Codex, the most accurate of the early codices, but its text can be reconstructed



## Song of the Sea

As well as being one of the most beautiful pieces of poetry in the Hebrew Bible, scholars agree that Exodus 15, the Song of the Sea, is one of the oldest passages in the Hebrew Bible. The Song of the Sea describes Yahweh's deliverance of his people Israel from Egyptian slavery. While the Israelites crossed the Red Sea safely, the Egyptians who pursued them were drowned—as Exodus 15:4 says, “Pharaoh’s chariots and his army he [Yahweh] cast into the sea.”

Written in a pattern resembling brickwork, the Song of the Sea is set apart from the surrounding text. The only other poem in the Hebrew Bible that is given such special formatting is the Song of Deborah in Judges 5.

The earliest appearance of the Song of the Sea with this special brickwork formatting is in the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript (bottom left). It also appears in the well-preserved Leningrad Codex (bottom right) and became the standardized way of copying the poem. To this very day, Torah scrolls—such as the one pictured to the left (c. 1780–1810)—are written using the brickwork pattern.

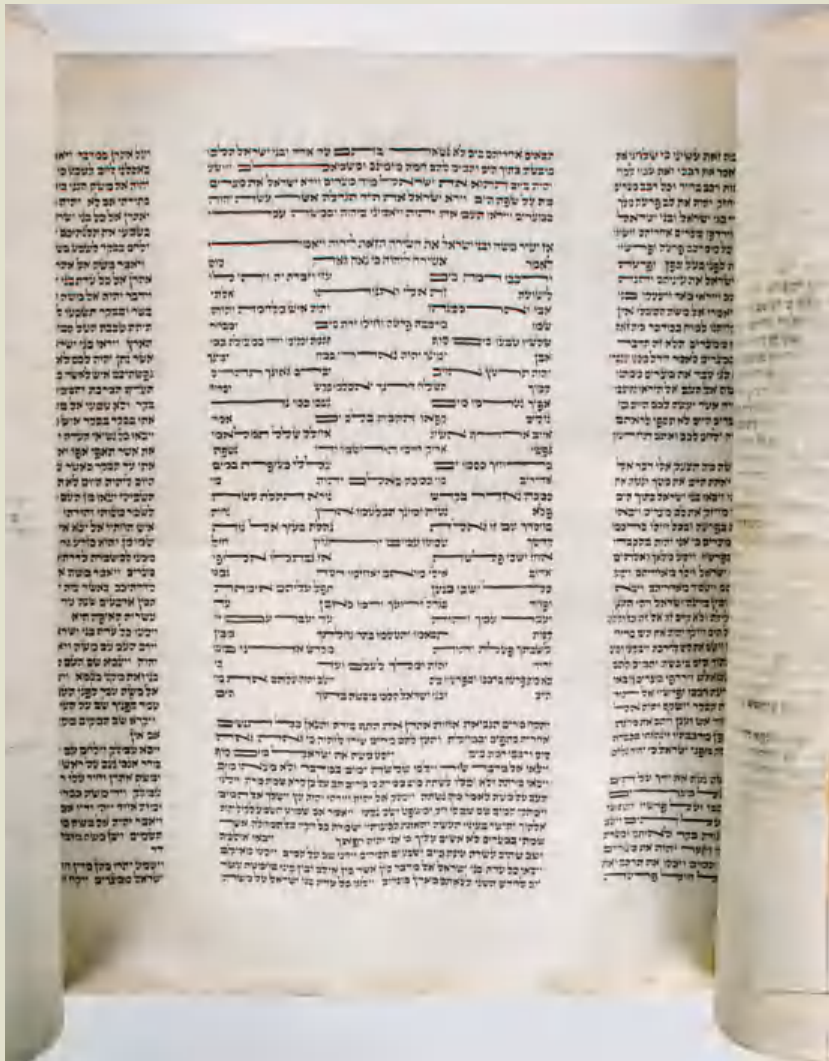
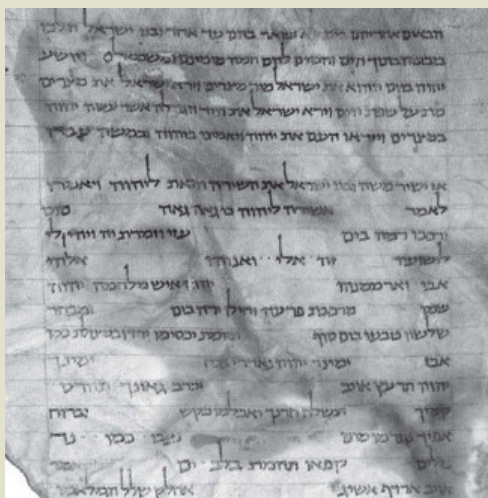
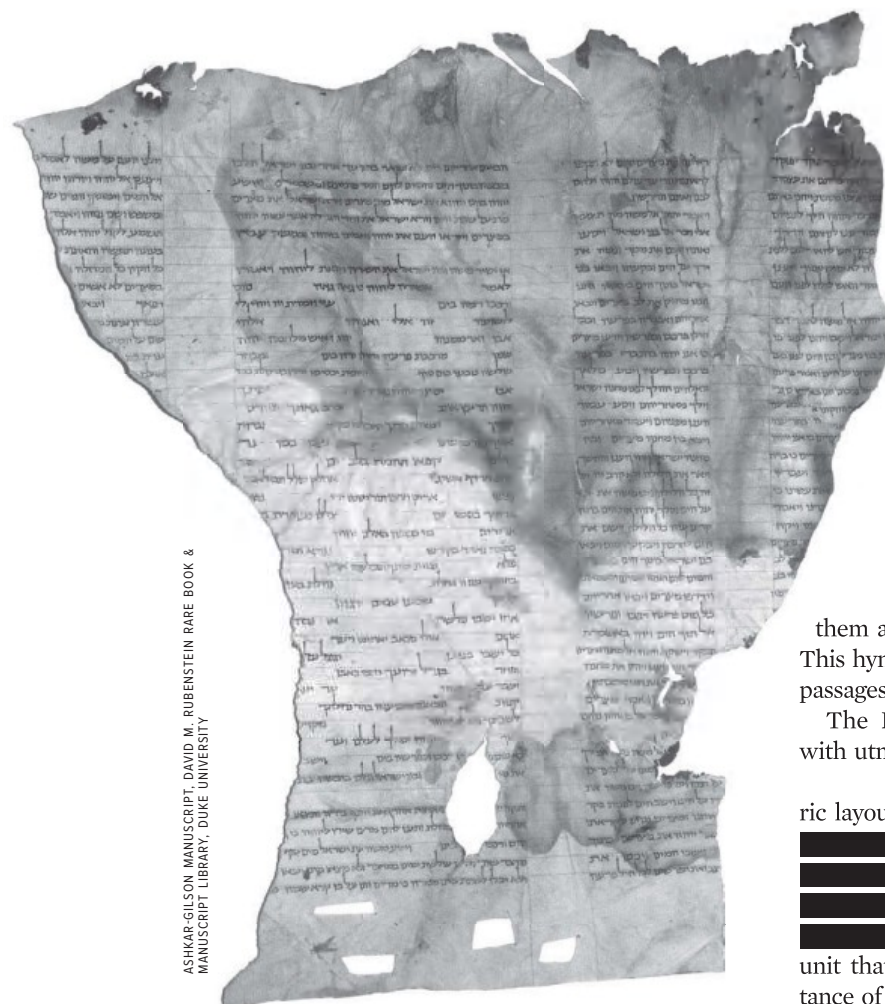


PHOTO BY BRITTNEY BROWN, MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE



ASHKAR-GILSON MANUSCRIPT, DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, DUKE UNIVERSITY





ASHKAR-GILSON MANUSCRIPT, DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, DUKE UNIVERSITY

**A NEW LIGHT.** In normal light, the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript is difficult to read (see image on p. 47), but in the infrared photograph (left), its writing becomes more legible. The consonantal text found in the Ashkar-Gilson and London Manuscripts conforms exactly to the Masoretic text in the authoritative codices from the ninth and tenth centuries. This demonstrates that the Masoretes had a standardized text of the Hebrew Bible from several centuries earlier than the Aleppo and Lenin-grad Codices.

Look closely: In the infrared lighting, horizontal and vertical lines appear; Jewish scribes le these lines to ensure that their writing was l and that they stayed within the margins.

א (Exodus 15). Moses and the Israelites is hymn after God had parted the sea for them and then drowned Pharaoh's pursuing army. This hymn, it is generally agreed, is one of the oldest passages of the Hebrew Bible.

The Masoretic copyists transmitted this poem with utmost care. Apparently they were aware of its ality. They copied it in a special symmetric layout that resembles brickwork, with two blank the even lines and one blank space in the This arrangement was chosen not only for but also for its meaning, with each of the rking the end of a colon (a small poetic unit that must be sung in one breath). The importance of this brickwork layout is reflected in the fact that it is reproduced in every Torah scroll used in synagogues today. (A similar layout is required only for the Song of Deborah in Judges 5, another old and exceptionally beautiful poem.)

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Song of the Sea does not yet have this special layout. But it does appear in the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript! This marks the first time the brickwork pattern is found, without any deviation from the later arrangement.

In the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript, some minor details in the column with the song are accidental. These details concern the layout, as well as the column's coincidental start with an ordinary Hebrew word (הבאים) meaning "that went in" (namely, into the sea; Exodus 14:28).

Remarkably enough, even these insignificant details are also found in the oldest Masoretic codices. But there they are not accidental. The copyists had to make a special effort to reproduce them as faithfully as possible. For instance, they compressed or spaced out the text in the preceding columns to let the column with the Song of the Sea start with

with certainty.) The text of the codices agrees completely with the text of the Ashkar-Gilson and London Manuscripts. (In some codices there are a few insignificant orthographic deviations concerning some slightly different spellings.)

This shows for the first time that the Masoretic copyists reproduced an older consonantal text as faithfully as possible and did not allow their copies to deviate from the original. Only meaningless variants were sometimes still accepted. Of course, the Ashkar-Gilson and London Manuscripts display only part of the Hebrew Bible—some excerpts from Exodus—and it cannot be proven that the rest of the Hebrew Bible was also copied so carefully. But it is hardly conceivable that the care of the copyists was limited to these sections of Exodus. *This proves that the text of the Hebrew Bible was stabilized earlier than when the Masoretes created their first codices.*

But there is more. By some good fortune, the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript contains one of the most beautiful examples of Biblical poetry, the Song of

CONTINUES ON PAGE 74





# Coptic

## Egypt's Christian Language

Leo Depuydt

**THE COPTIC LANGUAGE HAS BEEN IN THE** news recently. Loudly. And everywhere; also in **BAR**.<sup>\*</sup> Perhaps more than is good for it. Remember the Coptic “Gospel of Jesus’ Wife,” whose claim to authenticity trumpeted worldwide by elevated authorities was promptly pulverized into subatomic particles and laughed off the stage? But about that, not here. Not now. Not again. About consequences, more later. A total, formal and unconditional retraction of articles and statements claiming authenticity would be a great start, from a professional

<sup>\*</sup>Hershel Shanks, “The Saga of ‘The Gospel of Jesus’ Wife,’” *BAR*, May/June 2015.

perspective. And we’ll get to the ethics when we get there. Also, should competence be an issue, as has been suggested? Now, let’s all think about that.

Meanwhile, on a lighter note: What is Coptic? And who are the Copts? How do Coptic and the Copts fit into world history, all 5,000 years of it? The matter is of some complexity, and clear and succinct definitions are not easy to fashion. **BAR** readers may

**CRUMBLING COPTIC CODEX.** Dated to the fifth or sixth century C.E., this fairly complete but badly damaged copy of the Book of Acts was written in the Sahidic dialect of Coptic. It originated in Egypt and is kept at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.



© ERICH LESSING

**WORLD CONQUEROR.** At the age of 30, Alexander the Great ruled an empire that stretched from his homeland of Greece to Egypt in the south and to India in the east. Showing Alexander on his horse Bucephalus in battle against Darius III of Persia, this mosaic comes from Pompeii, Italy, and dates to c. 100 B.C.E. After Alexander died, his general Ptolemy I Soter became the ruler of Egypt and even declared himself pharaoh, thus establishing the Ptolemaic dynasty that governed Egypt for nearly 300 years.

find the following short story of the Copts and their origins, spanning thousands of years, useful for general orientation in an arcane subject. Coptic is the language of Egypt when Egypt was largely Christian. The fascinating story begins 5,000 years ago.<sup>1</sup>

History is by definition the period from which we have written sources. What comes before is prehistory. In this sense, history begins in about 3000 B.C.E. with cuneiform writing in Mesopotamia and hieroglyphic writing in Egypt. In other words, the history of humankind starts in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

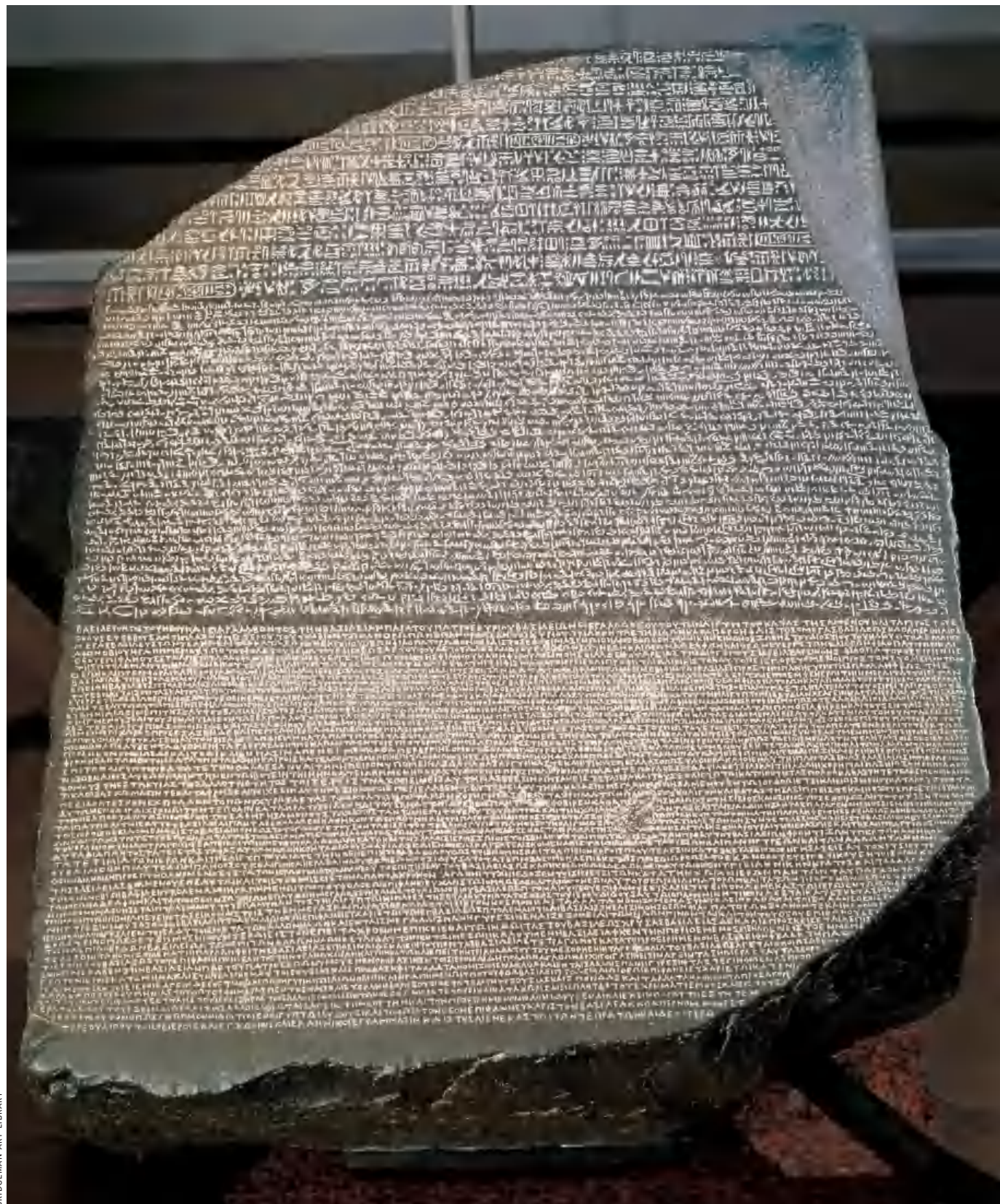
Over the centuries, the Egyptian language changed in five successive stages (Coptic being the fifth). In the first three, Egyptian was written with hieroglyphs—pictures denoting words or sounds. The fourth stage is Demotic, written in a highly cursive variant of hieroglyphic writing also called Demotic. Demotic emerged around 650 B.C.E. when contacts between Egypt and the Greek world began to intensify.

In 332 B.C.E., Alexander the Great conquered Egypt. Nine years later, at his death in 323, his general Ptolemy started a dynasty of Greek immigrant kings—almost all called Ptolemy—that lasted about 300 years. The Rosetta Stone, the British Museum's top attraction, was composed in this period. It dates to 196 B.C.E. Issued in Memphis, it publishes a decree in hieroglyphic writing, in Demotic and in Greek. The fact that the Greek version could obviously be read and understood greatly inspired efforts at deciphering the two other versions, even if critical keys to the decipherment were not yielded by the Rosetta Stone as is typically assumed.<sup>2</sup> Coptic played a key role in the decipherment as the only stage of Egyptian that could be understood, and the

**DECODING HIEROGLYPHS.** The Rosetta Stone bears an inscription in three scripts: hieroglyphs, Demotic and Greek. Prior to its discovery, the knowledge of how to read Egyptian hieroglyphs had been lost. Since the Greek inscription on the bottom third of the Rosetta Stone was intelligible, the stone played a significant part in the decipherment of hieroglyphs. Another less credited factor for the decryption was the Coptic language, the only form of Egyptian that was still understood.

The Rosetta Stone itself is the bottom part of a stele that was set up to affirm the royal cult of Ptolemy V in 196 B.C.E. It was discovered near el-Rashid (Rosetta), Egypt, in 1799 by Napoleon's men. Following Napoleon's defeat, the stone was taken to England and placed in the British Museum.







BUST: © DEA PICTURE LIBRARY/ART RESOURCE, NY

COINS: © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM/ART RESOURCE, NY

decipherer, Jean-François Champollion, studied it in great detail.

At the time Greek was spoken in Egypt mainly by a minority upper class, concentrated in the cities, and especially in the new capital built by Alexander himself, Alexandria. Most of the Egyptians, however, spoke Egyptian.

The last ruler of Ptolemy's dynasty was Queen Cleopatra. At her death in 30 B.C.E., Egypt was conquered by Rome. Egypt was henceforth a province of the Roman Empire.

Modern Egyptians call their country *Miṣr* or, more colloquially, *Maṣr*. *Miṣr* was the name for Cairo, which was founded only in the tenth century C.E., but the name itself has an ancient Semitic origin, appearing in Hebrew as *Miṣraim*, in Syriac (an Aramaic dialect) as *Meṣren*, in Ugaritic as *Mṣrm* and in Babylonian and Assyrian sources as *Muṣur* and *Muṣri*. The name "Egypt" derives from the ancient Greek word for Egypt, *Aiguptos*. "Coptic" derives from the same Greek word—but with a detour through Arabic. The two occlusives *p* and *t* in the word "Coptic" are the same *p* and *t* as in the word "Egypt."

We are now getting closer to Coptic (a language) and the Copts (a people); the story is getting warm, so to speak. Cleopatra died a little less than 30 years

**FINAL PHARAOH.** Renowned for her beauty, intelligence and cunning, Cleopatra VII was the last ruling pharaoh of the Ptolemaic Dynasty in Egypt. She secured her throne by aligning herself with two of the most powerful men in the Roman world: Julius Caesar and, later, Marc Antony. Roman historian Cassius Dio described her as a "woman of surpassing beauty" with "a most charming voice and a knowledge of how to make herself agreeable to everyone" (*Roman History* 42.34.4). The Greek historian Plutarch paints a slightly different picture of the queen's beauty: "For her beauty, as we are told, was in itself not altogether incomparable, nor such as to strike those who saw her" (*Life of Antony* 27.2). He explains that instead Cleopatra's charm lay in her discourse, presence and character.

The upper left bust from the Vatican Museum and upper right silver denarius from the collection of the British Museum are some of the few representations of the famous Egyptian queen to have survived from her lifetime. The bust was sculpted between 50 and 30 B.C.E. Minted in 32 B.C.E., the coin depicts Cleopatra on one side (top) and Marc Antony on the other (bottom).

before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. During its first three centuries, Christianity spread slowly and gradually. That all changed in the fourth century C.E., when the Roman emperor Constantine declared Christianity a licit religion (in 325 C.E.) and then was himself baptized on his deathbed in 337 C.E.





## The Five Stages of Egyptian Language

Egyptian may be the oldest attested language in the world. The earliest primitive writing dates to a little before 3000 B.C.E. and is possibly older than the earliest form of Sumerian. Egyptian is also the longest attested in writing of all languages, being *both written and spoken* for more than 3,500 years, down to 1000 C.E. and a little beyond. Over this long period, the spoken language evolved through five main stages. The first three are (1) **Old Egyptian**, (2) **Middle Egyptian** and (3) **Late Egyptian** and date roughly to, respectively, the (1) Old Kingdom (2600–2100 B.C.E.), (2) First Intermediate Period, Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period (2100–1500 B.C.E.) and (3) New Kingdom (1500–1000 B.C.E.). A third stage are written either in hieroglyphic writing, which consists of pictures denoting meanings or sounds, or in hieratic, a cursive form of hieroglyphic writing.

**Middle Egyptian** remained in use as a kind of written-only

classical language alongside later written stages after spoken Middle Egyptian evolved into Late Egyptian. An example is the image above to the left, from a Book of the Dead manuscript dated to about 1250 B.C.E. and kept at the British Museum. In the vignette, Re is shown in his solar barge. The text is

written in cursive hieroglyphs.

The fourth phase of Egyptian is **Demotic**, written in a highly cursive form of hieroglyphs also called Demotic and attested from about 650 B.C.E. onward. The Demotic manuscript above to the right is a contract for a metayage system of farming (a form of sharecropping). Coming from Thebes, it dates to 533 B.C.E. and is kept at the Louvre.

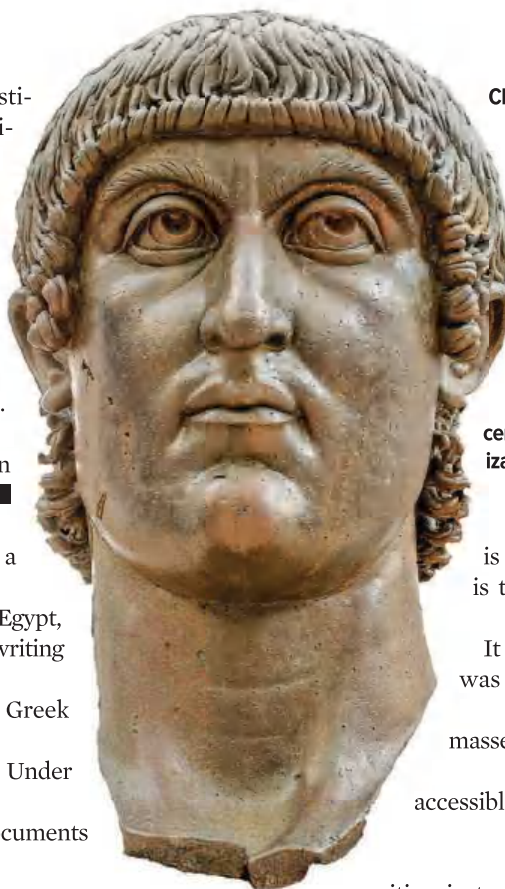
The fifth and final phase of the Egyptian language is **Coptic**, which is written with the Greek alphabet augmented by a handful of signs borrowed from Demotic. Full-fledged written Coptic emerged around 300 C.E. Coptic ceased being spoken sometime between 1000 C.E. and 1500 C.E., but the clergy has remained able to read it (more or less) down to the present day. The Coptic manuscript to the left is a fragment of the Gospel of Luke from the Louvre.



By about 450 C.E. Christianity had become the religion of the majority of Egyptians. Thus, over the course of four centuries, the 3,000-year-old ancient Egyptian religion had to make way for Christianity. Only isolated pockets of the old religion deep south of Egypt survived. And in the sixth century, Byzantine emperor Justinian ordered even those pockets eradicated. Over the course of five centuries, Egypt had become a Christian country.

With the Roman rule of Egypt, the use of both hieroglyphic writing and Demotic (its cursive) dramatically declined. The Greek language was supplied for administrative purposes. Under Roman rule, there was no sure way to write all kinds of documents in Greek and not in Egyptian.

The precise course of events is by no means clear, but what is clear is that around 300 C.E. or a little later, a fully developed, fully standardized way of writing Egyptian with Greek letters augmented by a few Demotic signs emerged. That



**CHRISTIANITY'S CHAMPION.** Nearly 150 years after the death of Jesus, this massive bronze bust of Constantine the Great, made in the fourth century C.E. of the Roman Empire, depicts the emperor who played a significant role in the spread of Christianity. Not only did he proclaim Christianity a lawful religion in 325, but he was baptized on his deathbed in 337. By 450 C.E.—a century and a quarter after its legalization—Christianity had become the dominant religion in Egypt.

is what we now call Coptic. It is the fifth stage of the Egyptian

It is often assumed that Coptic was developed to facilitate the communication of the Egyptian masses. Hieroglyphic and Demotic were just too difficult to be accessible to many. According to this spread of Christianity, the decline of hieroglyphic

writing just as much as it precipitated the decline of ancient Egyptian culture and Egyptian religion in general. A great Belgian Coptologist, Louis Théophile Lefort, had another idea, with which I am inclined to agree. He showed that there

## Coptic Literature at a Glance

Two key traits characterize Coptic literature: First, most of it is Christian in purport, and, second, it is popular in tone.<sup>1</sup>

From the time of Alexander's conquest onward, all sophisticated discourse in Egypt was conducted in Greek. Coptic was the vehicle of popular Christianity. At the center of Coptic Christian literature stands the historically important Coptic version of the Bible. Nearly complete versions have been preserved in two Coptic dialects and fragments in others.

The majority of Coptic literature relates to a Sunday church service: Bible readings, a sermon on a Bible passage or on a prominent saint or

martyr, and liturgical texts to connect the two.

Coptic sources also provide crucial information about the earliest history of monasticism, which is not surprising since Egypt is widely regarded as the cradle of monasticism.

Another category of Christian Coptic literature is the so-called apocryphal gospels that fed the popular need for more information about Biblical characters, such as Jesus as a child, his mother Mary or the individual apostles.

One scholar has computed that roughly 40 million letters of Coptic literature survive.<sup>2</sup> In English, that would correspond to about 100 books

of 80,000 words—or 200 pages. In other words: There are fewer than 500 books of Coptic literature in existence—but considerably more than 20. Many of the world's oldest well-preserved books or codices (as distinct from the rolls or scrolls from earlier times) are in Coptic. They are inscribed either on papyrus or parchment and date to the fourth century C.E.—hardly earlier.

<sup>1</sup> For more detail on the topic of Coptic literature, see Leo Depuydt, "Coptic and Coptic Literature," in Alan B. Lloyd, ed., *A Companion to Ancient Egypt* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 732–754.

<sup>2</sup> Rodolphe Kasser, "Kat'aspe aspe," in Louis Painchaud and Paul Hubert Poirier, eds., *Coptica—Gnostica—Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), pp. 389–492.





was a time when the Coptic Old Testament existed and the New Testament did not. Who would be in need of only the Old Testament but not the New Testament? The answer is easy: Jewish scribes, of course.\* In short, Coptic may well have been a Jewish creation, Lefort argues. Of course Coptic may well have also been picked up later for the cause of Christian evangelization.

Sometime between 200 and 400 C.E., Egyptians became a predominantly Christian people. We now call Egyptian Christians of this time Copts and the Egyptian language of this time, written mainly in Greek letters, Coptic—although Coptic-speaking Egyptian Christians themselves never called themselves Copts nor their language Coptic.

The fourth century marks the beginning of what may be called the Christian period in the history of Egypt—or the Coptic period, because “Coptic” can mean “Christian Egyptian.” If one were to take a long walk anywhere in Egypt in the period from

\*Jewish scribes would have used the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, as their base text.

**SUSPENDED CHURCH.** Al-Mu’allaqah—the Hanging Church—in Old Cairo is so named because it was built on top of the gatehouse of a Roman fortress, and its nave “hangs” over a passage leading into the fortress. The church is accessed by a large staircase at the end of a narrow courtyard.

While the Hanging Church was most likely built in the seventh century C.E., possibly over an earlier church dating to the third or fourth century, the first mention of it was not until the ninth-century biography of Patriarch Joseph I. Despite its age, the church is in good repair, with the most recent round of renovations wrapping up in October 2014.

the 400s to the 800s, one would find the landscape dotted with churches.

What ended the 500-year Coptic Christian period in Egypt, which lasted from the fourth century to the ninth century? Only a few centuries after the new religion of Christianity had brought deep change to much of the inhabited world, a second new religion, Islam, brought equally deep change to the Middle East, North Africa and beyond. Gradually, in vast areas that had evolved from minority Christian to majority

## Coptic Incipits

Life is fraught with danger. Thus, it is not surprising that throughout the ages, people have taken safety precautions. One of the ways this was done in Coptic Egypt was through the use of amulets, protective charms believed to ward off evil.

Amulets had been known in Egypt long before the Coptic period, but during this time an interesting change took place. The old spells were often interused and replaced with short citations of Scripture from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. In many cases, these citations took the form of a phrase or an *incipit*.

Meaning “it begins” in Latin, an *incipit* refers to the beginning of a work—be it a book, song, poem, prayer, musical piece or (in the modern world of computer science) an encryption code. With texts, an *incipit* usually signifies the title or opening phrase.

Amulets containing *incipits* of Biblical passages have been uncovered from Egypt and are the subject of a recent book by Joseph Sanzo.<sup>1</sup> Like any good tradesman, ritual specialists who made amulets would customize them to suit their consumers’ needs. The Biblical passages they selected were often meant to address particular concerns or ailments. Common *incipits* include Psalm 91 (Psalm 90 in the Septuagint), the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9) and the beginnings of the Gospels.<sup>2</sup>

Written on vellum, the Coptic amulet (right) dates to the seventh or eighth century C.E. It has the titles and initial words of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as well as magical symbols along the bottom of the page. This piece of parchment was rolled up, placed inside a case and then worn by an individual.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph E. Sanzo, *Scriptural Incipits on Amulets from Late Antique Egypt*. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 84 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Sanzo, *Scriptural Incipits*, p. 2.



[biblicalarchaeology.org/incipits](http://biblicalarchaeology.org/incipits) See more about Coptic *incipits* online.



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PAPYROLOGY COLLECTION

Christian, Christianity found itself returning to minority status after just a couple of centuries. This is the origin of the Christian minorities in the Near East.

The coming of Islam to Egypt was the beginning of the long process of the Islamization of Egypt, a process that in the end reduced the number of Christians in the Egyptian population to what may be about 10 percent.

The Muslim conquerors of Egypt spoke Arabic. What they found upon arriving in Egypt around 640 C.E. was a Christian country in which a minority upper class spoke and did business in Greek and a majority lower class spoke and wrote (to the extent they wrote) a stage of Egyptian that we now call Coptic, but also did part of their business in Greek.

The history of early Christianity is complex, involving schisms, denominations, sects, councils, etc. Most significant to the history of the Egyptian

or Coptic Church before the arrival of Islam was the Council of Chalcedon in 451 C.E. At that council, the dominant patriarch of Constantinople and the patriarch of Alexandria parted ways. Most of the Coptic Church under the patriarch of Alexandria adopted the doctrine of Monophysitism (single [*mono*]-nature [*physis*]-ism), which holds that there is only one single nature in Christ, namely his divine nature. The Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches hold that there are two natures in Christ, both divine and human, a doctrine called dyophysitism (two [*dyo*]-nature [*physis*]-ism). The Copts are Monophysite Egyptian Christians.

The term “Coptic” cannot antedate the Muslim conquest of Egypt around 641 C.E., however, because the term is an Arabic form of the Greek word for Egypt.

When the Arab conquerors arrived, the people






**CONDEMNED MONKS.** The Christian Council of Chalcedon in 451 C.E. declared that Monophysitism—the belief that Jesus had just one (divine) nature—was heresy. The council affirmed that Jesus had two natures: human and divine. This declaration caused a schism in the Christian Church, with certain groups such as the Coptic Church and the Syriac Church rejecting the council's decision. Dating to the fifth century, this limestone stele inscribed in Syriac lists the names of monks who were Monophysites and who did not uphold the Council of Chalcedon. The stele is part of the collection of the National Museum in Aleppo, Syria.

were predominantly Christian. All traces of the native Egyptian religion had vanished by then. Moreover, the conquerors found two denominations of Christianity: the Monophysites and the Melchites—those in union with Constantinople. The word “Melchite” is derived from the Arabic word for “king,” *malik*. The term “Coptic” was and is, somewhat confusingly, applied both to all Egyptian Christians (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant) and specifically to Monophysites.

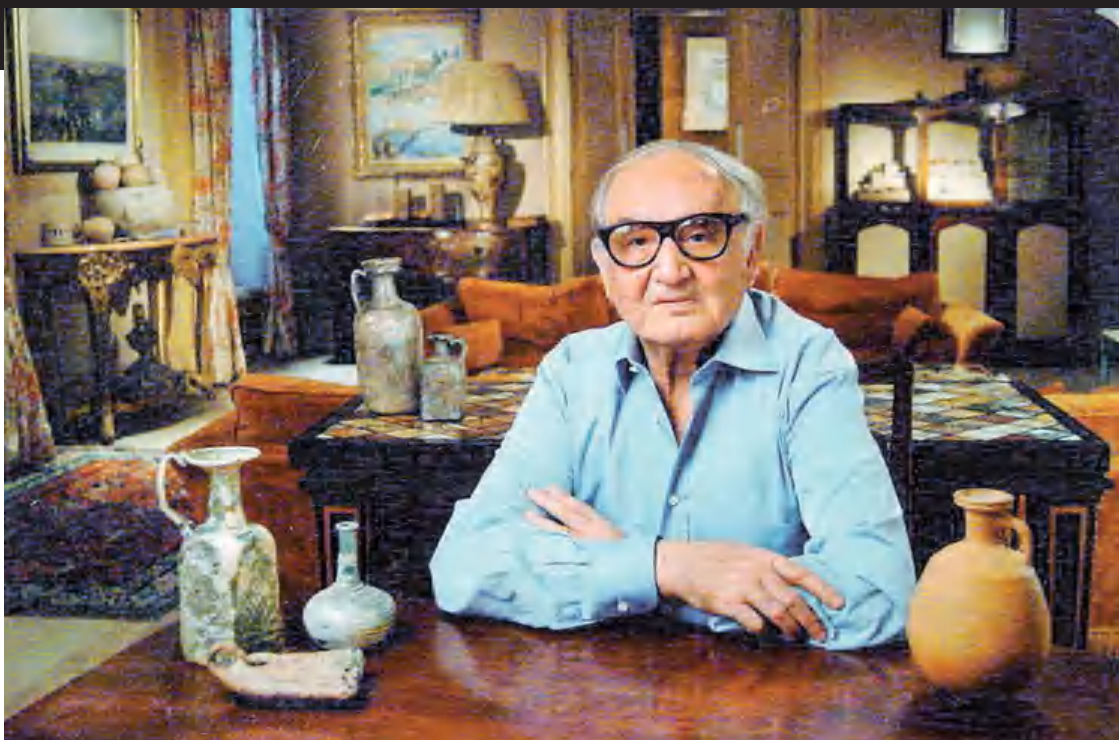
For a couple of centuries after the Muslim conquest of Egypt, the Christians remained in the majority. But by the 11th or 12th centuries, the Copts had become a minority. And, of course, the number of speakers of Coptic Egyptian steadily declined. By the 12th or 13th century, presumably only a few Coptic speakers were left. By about 1500, almost everyone—if not everyone—spoke Arabic, as all Egyptians do today, including Christians, or Copts.

The past couple of years have been good to the Coptic language. It has received much attention. Never mind the circumstances, like Coptic being at the epicenter of a mind-bending phantasmagoric farce with few if any precedents in the history of higher learning. If you think this was bad, think again. This was worse than bad. But hey, one takes what one can get. After all, Coptic did make it out alive.

To historians and students of languages, Coptic is a subject of delightful intricacy. At first sight, it seems to be nowhere, but as one takes a closer look at all its multivariied connections to the course of human history—languages, religions, popes, prophets, empires, kings, queens, decipherments—Coptic appears to be everywhere. 

<sup>1</sup> This article consists of excerpts from the Fourth Annual Henri Hyvernât Lecture, delivered by the present writer on March 26, 2015, at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. An extended version of the lecture honoring Hyvernât's memory and discussing Coptic literature in greater detail will be published in Leo Depuydt, “The Literature of the Copts and the Contributions of Monsignor Hyvernât to the Study of the Subject (Fourth Annual Henri Hyvernât Lecture),” *Advances in Historical Studies* 4 (2015), pp. 320–335 (doi: 10.4236/ahs.2015.44022).

<sup>2</sup> See Leo Depuydt, *Fundamentals of Egyptian Grammar*, vol. 1 (Norton, MA: Frog Publishing, 2012), pp. 565–578.



# Renowned Collector Shlomo Moussaieff Dies at 92

**SHLOMO MOUSSAIEFF OF HERZLIYA, ISRAEL,** and London, England, who owned the world's largest private collection of Near Eastern antiquities, surpassing that of many major museums, died in Israel on June 29, 2015, at the age of 92.

To the very end, he never stopped buying. "Pay and they will bring you," he would say. And antiquities dealers, both legitimate and otherwise, would beat a path to his door both on Grosvenor Square in London and on the entire 14th floor of the Daniel Hotel in Herzliya. He had no concern for whether the object was looted or not. If he didn't buy it, someone else would, was his credo.

There was no end to what he would buy, although his collection of Judaica was an especial focus of his last years.

Many scholars despised him, especially archaeologists who spend their lives digging with a toothbrush to unearth details of our past that are sometimes

rich in meaning but mostly unimpressive physically. Other scholars welcomed the opportunity to bring to the public rare and often important artifacts, especially inscriptions, which, they argued, were of great significance to our understanding of ancient history and would otherwise be lost to us.

Major museums in Israel, including the Israel Museum and the Bible Lands Museum—both in Jerusalem—displayed items from his collection, including, for example, elegant glass fashioned by Ennion, the greatest of the Greek glassmakers, of which Moussaieff owned more than either the Sorbonne or the British Museum—to say nothing of the Metropolitan in New York.

**SHLOMO MOUSSAIEFF, who owned the world's largest private collection of Near Eastern antiquities, passed away in the summer of 2015 at the age of 92. What is the future of his collection?**



**“ENNION MADE IT.”** Moussaieff inspects a glass amphora signed by Ennion, the famous first-century C.E. glassmaker from the Phoenician city of Sidon. Moussaieff owned more Ennion glass than the world’s major museums.

Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv awarded Moussaieff an honorary doctorate in gratitude for his gift of rare Jewish mystical texts (kabbalah) and doubtless in the hope that more would come from Shlomo’s Judaica collection.

The Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) had a different, often contradictory, attitude toward him. On one occasion it had Moussaieff and his daughter searched for contraband at the airport. (Of course, they found nothing.) At other times, the IAA courted him.

Numerous highly respected scholars published books and articles based on his collection, especially regarding the inscriptions on ostraca (pottery sherds), seals and bullae, jars, arrowheads, weights, etc.

In 2003 a festschrift (a collection of scholarly articles) was published in Moussaieff’s honor with contributions by a roster of prominent scholars that included W.G. Lambert, Mark Geller, Aren Maeir, Peter van der Veen, Irit Ziffer, Ada Yardeni, Bezalel Porten, Meir Lubetski, André Lemaire, Dan Barag, Michael Heltzer, Robert Deutsch, Edward Lipiński

\* Hershel Shanks, “Festschrift for Moussaieff,” *BAR*, November/December 2003.

**THE MOUSSAIEFF OSTRACA** bear inscriptions whose authenticity has been called into question. One (bottom left) is known as the Three Shekels ostracon and logs the donation of three shekels to the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. The other (bottom right) is called the Widow’s Plea ostracon and records, in the same handwriting as the Three Shekels ostracon, a widow’s petition for part of her deceased husband’s estate.



SONIA HALLIDAY/THE MOUSSAIEFF COLLECTION, LONDON

and others.<sup>1\*</sup> These studies were mostly about items in Moussaieff’s collection.

Although Shlomo enlisted scholars to publish some categories of artifacts in his collection, for the most part it was simply placed in vitrines roughly sorted by category, unpublished, unstudied, uncataloged, housed in room after room of his homes or piled on the floor or hung on the wall, often in disarray—mosaics, inscriptions, tombstones, sculptures, an ancient synagogue lintel, altars, rings, metal objects, magic incantation bowls; huge things and





**THE SPLENDOR OF DIAMONDS** exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., featured seven of the world's rarest and most valuable diamonds, including the Moussaieff Red.

small things; from every ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern culture you can think of.

He was deaf to those who urged him to make provision for his collection on his death, or so he claimed. He professed not to care what happened to his collection on his death. In mid-2013, bent and frail but clear of mind, he told me he would leave his collection to the Israel Museum, the Bible Lands Museum and a third museum that he had not yet chosen.

No doubt Moussaieff has purchased some forgeries in his lifetime of collecting, but none of his most important inscriptions has been so proved. Two of his most famous inscriptions are the so-called Moussaieff Ostraca, one known as the Three Shekels ostraca and the other as the Widow's Plea ostraca (see p. 63). Both have been published in *BAR*.<sup>\*</sup> Both were alleged to be forgeries in the Forgery Trial of the Century, but were returned to Moussaieff at the conclusion of the trial upon the defendants' acquittal. Legitimate questions remain, however, concerning their authenticity. Epigraphy specialist Robert Deutsch calls these ostraca "problematic." André Lemaire, renowned paleographer at the Sorbonne, says they have problems. Joseph Naveh, Israel's leading paleographer prior to his death in 2011, on first examination said they were good, but later changed his mind.<sup>\*\*</sup> Others claim they are forgeries. Leading French scholars, however, published them as authentic.<sup>2</sup>

Shlomo Moussaieff was born in 1923 in Jerusalem in a Bukharan family that traced its lineage to Maimonides, the great 12th-century Jewish author

of the Mishneh Torah and the philosophical treatise *The Guide for the Perplexed*.<sup>\*\*\*</sup> His was not a happy home, however. At 12, Shlomo fled his parental home for good and lived as a waif in the ancient caves of the Sanhedria Cemetery. The coins and ancient lamps he found there marked the beginning of his career as an antiquities dealer.

As a descendant of Maimonides, Shlomo was especially proud to have acquired three autograph pages by the hand of Maimonides himself. These transformed his life. When Israel's rabbinical authorities built their headquarters (Hechal Shlomo) in downtown Jerusalem, they wanted Shlomo Moussaieff's Maimonides autographs for their museum. Shlomo refused to sell. The rabbinical authorities found a way, however. Shlomo, who, by this time, had an antiquities shop near Jaffa Gate, was having some trouble with the authorities who were threatening to take away his license. Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek arranged to have the problem "adjusted," and Shlomo was given a promised rent-free shop in the Jerusalem Hilton if he would give up the Maimonides autographs. When Teddy failed to convince the Jerusalem Hilton owners of the plan, however, the owners of the London Hilton came forward with an offer of a long-term lease for \$5,000 a year. It worked. Moussaieff accepted and gave up the Maimonides autographs. The deal prompted Shlomo's 30-year move to London. To this day the Moussaieff name is the only one displayed on the outside of the London Hilton. It has become a jewelry store operated by Moussaieff's wife, Aliza.

In 2003 the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., mounted a special exhibit consisting solely of seven of the world's rarest and greatest diamonds displayed in a single vitrine. One of these diamonds, a nearly perfect red diamond of more than 5 carats, is known as the Moussaieff Red.

Shlomo Moussaieff is survived by his wife of 68 years; three daughters; and two grandchildren. His eldest daughter, Dorrit, is the First Lady of Iceland, married to President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson.—H.S.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Deutsch, ed., *Shlomo: Studies in Epigraphy, Iconography, History and Archaeology in Honor of Shlomo Moussaieff* (Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publications, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bordreuil, Felice Israel and Dennis Pardee, "Deux ostraca paléo-hébreux de la collection Sh. Moussaieff," *Semitica* 46 (1997), p. 49.

<sup>\*</sup>Hershel Shanks, "The 'Three Shekels' and 'Widow's Plea' Ostraca: Real or Fake?" *BAR*, May/June 2003.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Hershel Shanks, "First Person: Don't Buy Forgeries," *BAR*, July/August 1999.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>Hershel Shanks, "Magnificent Obsession: The Private World of an Antiquities Collector," *BAR*, May/June 1996.





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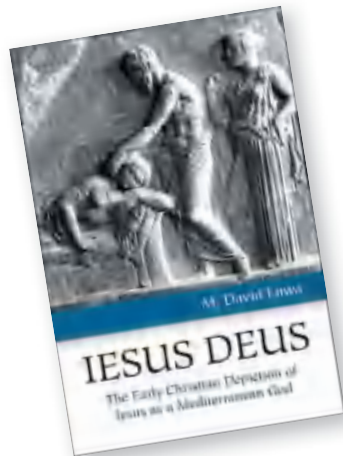
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## Greco-Roman Conception of Deity

### Jesus Deus: The Early Christian Depiction of Jesus as a Mediterranean God

By M. David Litwa

(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014),  
xi + 281 pp., \$39 (paperback)

Reviewed by James D.G. Dunn

THE PRINCIPAL THESIS OF this book is that “Christians constructed a divine Jesus with traits specific to deities in Greco-Roman culture.” Litwa also includes a sustained criticism of a scholarly tendency to focus attention primarily (and often solely) on Jewish influence in shaping early christology. Litwa does consider Judaism to be the primary matrix of early Christianity, but contends that “certain ‘Greco-Roman’ conceptions of deity were perceived by early Jews and Christians as proper to their own traditions.”

The thesis proceeds with studies of traditions concerning Jesus’ birth, childhood, miracles, transfiguration, resurrection and exaltation.

The New Testament accounts of Jesus’ birth are not so much influenced by, but understandable and resonant within, Greco-Roman culture. Litwa’s inquiry into Jesus’ childhood is purely in reference to the apocryphal *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, without asking how typical or widespread its views were.

Chapter 3 of Litwa’s book

maintains that in proclaiming Jesus in the wider Greco-Roman world, with its various miracle traditions, it was inevitable that miracles would be a major aspect. His main point is the inevitability of the stories about Jesus being set alongside, and in comparison with, the stories known by Celsus, the second-century Greek philosopher and opponent of early Christianity. The question of influence is not thereby resolved, however.

Least satisfactory is Litwa’s discussion of the transfiguration stories. He naturally draws heavily on the Jewish philosopher Philo, but never asks whether Philo ever compromised his monotheism. For Philo, God is ultimately unknowable—or can be known only through/in the Logos. That Philo had such a fulsome Logos theology, yet consciously reaffirms his monotheism, is a factor that should have been taken into account in any analysis of early christology. If “unambiguously deified” is inappropriate for Philo’s account of Moses, could not the same be said of Mark’s portrayal of Jesus?

In chapter 5, Litwa certainly gives a clear view of a world of thought where ascension would be understood in terms of deification. But he does not inquire into the earliest period of Christian reflection about

Jesus, where it is much less clear that the thought was influenced by wider reflections regarding Asclepius, Heracles and Romulus. Litwa needs to take account of the early hesitation among the first generation of Christians in referring to Jesus as *theos*. True, such hesitation had already been left behind by John’s Gospel, but the early hesitation makes it likely that parallels with those such as Heracles only became a factor after the thought of Jesus’ ascension had become established.

And in discussing “The Name Above Every Name,” Litwa should have given more attention to the flexibility of *kyrios*—and to the climax of Philippians 2:6–11 (“... to the glory of God the Father”). In other words, what we see is not so much an embracing of Greco-Roman conceptions of divinity as the use of a language that would appeal to a wider Greco-Roman audience—with all the greater impact in reference to one who had been crucified—but retained within the framework of Jewish monotheism.

The concluding chapter of this book is principally a justified criticism of Martin Hengel, for failure to take more account of Greco-Roman influence in his study of New Testament Christology—somewhat surprising given Hengel’s



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own work on the *Hellenization of Judea*. The trouble is, Litwa never asks when the Hellenization process began to influence earliest christology. He never asks when talk of Jesus' resurrection and ascension began and whether such thought had already been formulated before influence from the wider parallels in the Greco-Roman world came into play.

There are certainly important questions to be asked here. But when the question is justifiably raised about Greco-Roman influence, the question of whether Jewish monotheism retained a distinctive place within the wider religious thought should not be ignored—nor its influence in shaping earliest christology. And the question of the impact made by Jesus himself should certainly not be ignored.

*James D.G. Dunn is the Emeritus Lightfoot Professor of Divinity in the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University in England.*

## Following Jesus on the Ground

**In the Master's Steps:  
The Gospels in the Land  
The Carta New Testament Atlas, Vol. 1**

By R. Steven Notley  
(Jerusalem: Carta, 2014), 82 maps, photos  
and illustr., 88 pp., \$25 (paperback)

Reviewed by Claire Pfann

STUDENTS AND VISITORS TO ISRAEL often ask me to recommend one or two books they should purchase to help them better understand the world of Jesus. This is one of those books. Based on the magisterial atlas *The Sacred Bridge* by Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley,\* *In the Master's Steps* excerpts and updates the sections dealing with the Gospel narratives. *The Sacred Bridge* is quite literally a weighty tome of 448 beautifully

\*Reviewed by Harold Brodsky, "Mapping Biblical Events," *BAR*, March/April 2007.

illustrated, glossy pages in somewhat small print. (It weighs more than 4 pounds.) Notley's new publication sacrifices none of the scholarship or sophistication of that volume but presents it in a format that is physically more accessible—larger type, updated photos, excellent maps, Hebrew and Greek words in transliteration only—thereby broadening its user-friendliness.

In nine chapters, Notley addresses and assesses the major geographical and chronological blocks of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. He does not skirt difficult questions (e.g., the dating of Jesus' birth, Herod's death and the census of Quirinius; or the Galilean appearances of the resurrected Jesus [Mark 16:7; Matthew 28:7, 16–20; John 21] vs. Luke's Jerusalem narrative [Luke 24; Acts 1]). He assumes the reader has enough background to follow his discussion. Intriguing and often compelling suggestions are offered (e.g., the interpretation of "Nazorene" in Matthew 2:23; the identification of the Bethany of John the Baptist's ministry with Batanea/Bashan in the northeast).

Rabbit trails of previous generations are laid to rest (e.g., the myth of the Essene Quarter in Jerusalem), and thorny, still-unresolved issues are revisited (e.g., just where was Bethsaida/Julias located?).

Most important, new archaeological data are presented in rewritten sections from *The Sacred Bridge* (e.g., the excavations at Magdala; though an update on the recent work at the Pool of Siloam is lacking!), making this publication one of the most up-to-date dealing with the geography of the Gospels.

Perspectives commonly held by archaeologists and New Testament scholars, but less familiar to the broader audience (e.g., the location of ancient Cana, or the location of Jesus' trial before Pilate in the praetorium in the western side of the city), are clearly and judiciously explained.

Throughout, meticulous annotation (the New Testament, Josephus, Philo, Rabbinic literature, Pliny and the Church Fathers) assures the reader that the suggestions in this book are grounded in a deep and comprehensive familiarity with



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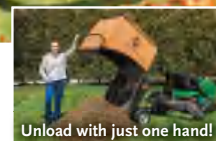
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the primary literary sources as well as with the archaeological data.

Notley is not dogmatic; he acknowledges that some questions cannot be resolved at this time due to insufficient data (the location of Bethsaida being a case in point), and some of the discussions cannot be adequately resolved in a few short pages (e.g., the tension in the chronology between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John regarding the date of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion—though he decisively lays to rest the suggestion that Jesus was following an Essene calendar).

It is rare to find a book so densely packed with critical information, one that

makes you want to dig deeper, one that would be most valuable to have beside you as you read the Gospels. A generation ago, Bargil Pixner's more devotional volumes met this need.<sup>1</sup> Today Notley's *In the Steps of the Master* has superseded Pixner's work. I know I will turn to it frequently in the years to come.

<sup>1</sup> Bargil Pixner, *With Jesus through Galilee: According to the Fifth Gospel* (Rosh Pina, Israel: Corazin Publishing, 1992); Bargil Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem: His First and Last Days in Judea* (Rosh Pina, Israel: Corazin Publishing, 1996).

Claire Pfann is the Academic Dean and Lecturer in New Testament at the University of the Holy Land, Jerusalem.

## Q&C

continued from page 12

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## STRATA ANSWERS

### How Many? (from p. 22)

**Answer: 1,650**

From a limestone quarry in Baalbek, Lebanon, archaeologists have uncovered a stone block that weighs 1,650 tons—as much as 220 adult male elephants.<sup>1</sup> Measuring 64 feet by 19.6 feet by 18 feet, this boulder is the largest carved stone ever found.

The ancient city of Baalbek was renamed Heliopolis, "the city of the sun," when Alexander the Great conquered the Near East in 334 B.C. Under the Roman Empire, the city boasted impressive temples to Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus.

The stone block—found in June 2014 by a team from the German Archaeological Institute—has been dated to c. 27 B.C. It is probable that this stone was carved to be part of the base of the temple of Jupiter, the podium of which contained massive 64-foot-long blocks. Three of the limestone blocks of the temple's base—called the Trilithon—each weighs 1,000 tons. For comparison, the largest ashlar in the wall of the Temple Mount weighs 415 tons and measures 46 feet by 10 feet by 10 feet.

Archaeologists from the German Archaeological Institute believe that the reason the 1,650-ton boulder was not used in the temple of Jupiter—but rather left in the quarry—was because it was unsuitable for transportation. It may

have cracked, as was the case of a 1,000-ton megalith at the quarry. Archaeologists determined that the stone quality at one edge of this latter boulder was poor; it likely would have cracked while being moved if it had been transported in antiquity.

<sup>1</sup> A male African elephant can weigh up to 7.5 tons. For more information, see "Mammals: Elephant," *San Diego Zoo Global*, animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/elephant.

### What Is It? (from p. 20)

**Answer: (E) Decorative eye**

During the Hellenistic period, some ships were decorated with marble disks painted to look like human eyes. The ships' eye decorations (*ophthalmoi*) were attached to the bow or hull. While their exact purpose is unknown, some speculate that they provided divine insight or protection from danger, keeping evil forces—and envy—at bay.

This marble disk was

discovered in shallow water near the shore of Yavneh-Yam, the only anchorage between Jaffa and the northern Sinai coast in antiquity. Although no remains of the ship itself have been found, the disk likely came from a fifth- or fourth-century B.C.E. shipwreck—based on other artifacts found in the shipwreck assemblage.

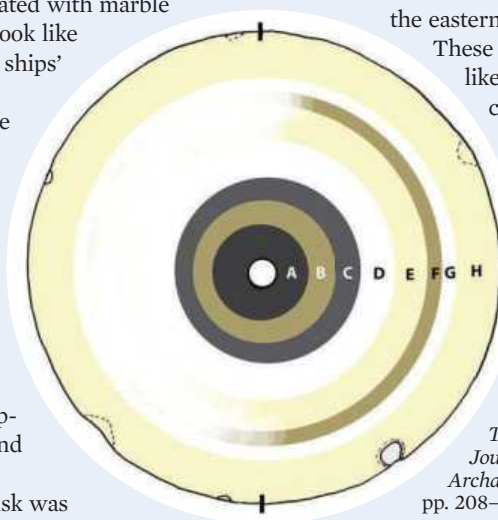
Weighing 3.3 pounds and measuring 7.6 inches across and an inch thick, the disk was painted with eight circular bands of different colors (see diagram, below) to resemble the different parts of an eye.<sup>1</sup> Seven lines, separating the different bands, are still discernible.

Parallels have been found throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

These marble disks were likely used on merchant ships. Larger, oared galleys were decorated with larger, almond-shaped marble eyes.

<sup>1</sup> Ehud Galili and Baruch Rosen, "Marble Disc *Ophthalmoi* from Two Shipwrecks off the Israeli Coast,"

*The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 44 (2015), pp. 208–213.





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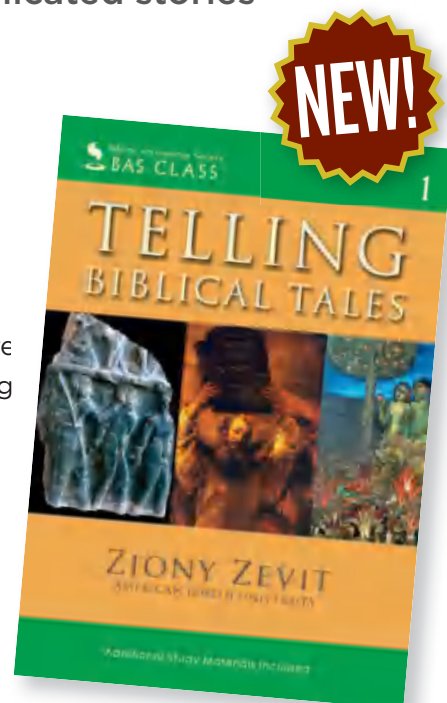
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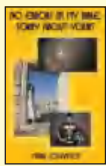
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## Pan at Hippos

*continued from page 45*

immediately clear that it was never intended to be worn in the theater.

What was it doing outside the city gate?

We have come up with the following four hypotheses about the purpose of the mask:

1. The mask was set up in a shrine for the worship of Pan/Faunus by the main road leading to the city. The worship of rustic gods like Pan or Dionysus was often ecstatic in nature, involving occasional sacrifices, drinking, nudity and orgies. It was only natural that the city preferred such rituals to be performed outside its walls.

The very location of Pan's cult in the Hippos region should not come as a surprise. The polis north of Hippos in the Golan, Paneas (Caesarea Philippi), was dedicated to Pan. There lies one of the largest worship compounds of Pan, set up in a cave.

2. Another possibility is that the mask functioned as a fountain-head. Although no clear erosion marks appear by its open mouth, the main water supply system of the city runs along the saddle ridge. Perhaps the city of Hippos wished to supply drinking water to those passing by the city or to those continuing their journey to the cities of Syria.

3. Perhaps the mask served as a burial offering in one of the nearby mausolea. A mausoleum has been excavated on the eastern side of the saddle ridge, and a necropolis stretches in the area south of the ditch.

4. A final theory suggests that the mask functioned as an *oscillum*. *Oscilla* were medallions or masks hung from trees or in between columns for offerings, worship or apotropaic reasons. In some festivals, *oscilla* in the shape of masks of rustic gods—among them Pan—were hung upon the boughs of trees, and offerings were made below them.

While at the moment we cannot say which of these four theories—or another—is correct, perhaps the answer will reveal itself during future excavations at the site. Regardless of its purpose, the Pan mask is one of a kind. 🐼



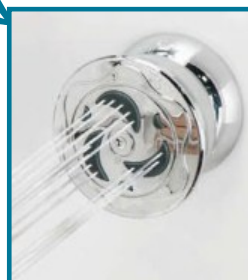
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## Bible Missing Link

*continued from page 52*

exactly the same word as the column in the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript. Even the copyists of the more recent Torah scrolls did their best to reproduce these seemingly insignificant details.

How can this be explained? I think there is only one convincing solution: The very Torah scroll of which the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript and London Manuscript are remnants was consulted by the Masoretes of Tiberias. In other words, this seventh- or eighth-century Torah scroll must have figured prominently when they produced the now-standard text of the Hebrew Bible.

The Masoretes were apparently impelled to maintain the “brickwork” layout of the original because of its exceptional beauty. This is hardly surprising. Other scribal features of the ancient Torah scroll are also impressive and conform to the highest standards of

the early Middle Ages. The sheets were dry-ruled before being inscribed—both vertically, to demarcate the margins of the columns, and horizontally for the individual lines. Also, the height of the columns conforms to the early medieval rule that a column of a Torah scroll must be 42 lines high. The text was written with a firm hand, and the copyist observed the ruled margins, trying to avoid protrusions beyond the margin line. Such features indicate that the Torah scroll was a first-class manuscript that deserved to be copied. So it is quite understandable that the Masoretic copyists selected this scroll.

It happens only rarely that a direct antecedent of ancient Biblical manuscripts can be traced. That this specific Torah scroll was used by the Masoretes could not have been shown on the basis of the London Manuscript alone. By a fortunate coincidence, the Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript also displays the text of the Song of the Sea and its context, thereby

providing crucial evidence for the use of the scroll in the creation of the Masoretic text still used in synagogues today.

Of course, this does not mean that the Masoretic text is the original text of the Hebrew Bible. The Biblical texts preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls differ from the Masoretic text that ultimately became authoritative. These Biblical manuscripts document the fact that at that time there was still a lot of flexibility in the transmission of the text.

So the Masoretic text is the fruit of a long process of both adaptation and faithful transmission.\* The period between the second and sixth centuries C.E. must have been one of gradual stabilization of the Biblical text. All of the surviving Dead Sea Scrolls that were written after the first Jewish revolt (post-70 C.E.) show a Biblical text that is already relatively close to the Masoretic

\*David Marcus and James A. Sanders, “What’s Critical About a Critical Edition of the Bible?” *BAR*, November/December 2013.



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text. For example, the Twelve Prophets' Scroll from Wadi Murabba'at, about 10 miles south of Qumran, was transcribed around 115 C.E. and contains excerpt passages from Joel to Zechariah. The text is remarkably close to the much later Masoretic text.

The following centuries must have seen a further stabilization of the normative Jewish Bible text. The Ashkar-Gilson and London Manuscripts prove that this process of stabilization had already come to an end some centuries before the Masoretes started to produce the earliest Bible codices. The Masoretes reproduced a text that had already been stabilized and no longer allowed any deviations. It was not their goal to innovate—but rather to preserve the finest textual traditions that existed at the time. ■

<sup>1</sup> For example, in his essay "The Development of the Masoretic Bible," in Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004,

2014), Jordan S. Penkower notes the paucity of texts in this interim: "It is especially difficult to reconstruct this period because we lack direct witnesses to the Hebrew text; i.e., we do not have Hebrew mss [manuscripts] from most of this period." The Ashkar-Gilson manuscript had apparently not yet been published.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Sanders, "The Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript: Remnant of a Proto-Masoretic Model Scroll of the Torah," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 14 (2014); see [http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article\\_201.pdf](http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_201.pdf).

## First Person

*continued from page 6*

Even Solomon's Temple, at least what we know about it, features other models. Perhaps the most distinctive Israelite architecture is the simple Four-Room House.

There is, of course, one other thing: Israel has the Bible. But the obvious answer to this is: The lands to the east are also the lands of the Bible—Sumer,

Mesopotamia, Babylonia and Persia. But the modern countries that comprise these lands don't want to think of their countries this way. And who can blame them? They have their own heritage.

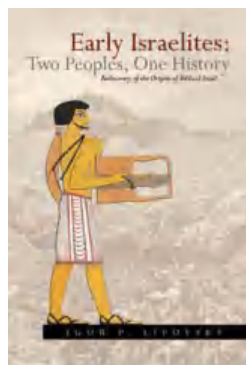
Even within Israeli archaeology, there is sometimes a contrast (or contest?) between people who want to find out what archaeology has to say concerning the Biblical text and scholars who want to focus on the details of daily life for its own sake or, more specifically, as background to the Bible.

In sum, archaeology is thriving in Israel, despite its comparative material poverty. In the east, archaeology was much more circumscribed even before the present turmoil.

So what are we to make of all this?

Clearly, I do not have answers. I can only make these disparate observations, some of which themselves may be inaccurate. But can I start a conversation? Let me have your thoughts. We will publish the most interesting.—H.S.

## Igor P. Lipovsky titles

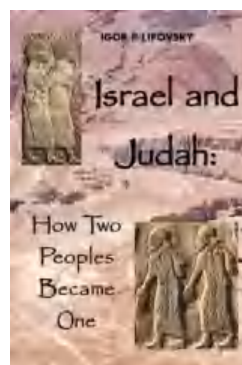


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## Biblical Views

*continued from page 26*

continue to believe in God nevertheless). But my point is this: There's little reason to believe that ancient Jews thought the events of 70 C.E. were theologically inexplicable. Ancient Jews had a ready-made theological explanation for the destruction of the Second Temple, as Biblical as that cannibalism motif: God was angry with the Jews, and so the Temple was destroyed. As the traditional Jewish liturgy puts it, "For the sake of our sins, we were exiled from our land." This is precisely how Josephus explains the destruction. It is precisely how the rabbis later explain the destruction. And it is precisely how the Hebrew Bible explains the destruction of the *First* Temple in 586 B.C.E.

I do not want to be misunderstood. My raising doubts about a *theological* crisis is not meant to minimize the extent of real suffering in the aftermath

of 70 C.E. I just want to counteract these assertions of mass apostasy and theological crisis. Both of these are modern projections—and odd ones to boot. Is it really the way of the world that the defeated just give up their past and embrace the religion of those who conquered them? Aren't ethno-religious conflicts intractable precisely because this is what *doesn't* generally happen? Survivors of defeat don't simply line up with their oppressors. To the contrary, they take comfort in the very fact of their survival—perceived, perhaps, as miraculous—and look forward to the day when the tables will turn once again in their favor. Modern rationalists may well assume that facts (such as a military defeat) would shatter a person's religious faith or ethnic identity. But look around: We have plenty of reason to wonder whether this kind of rationalism is much in play even today. It was probably less so in 70 C.E.

Of course, this doesn't prove there

wasn't mass apostasy after 70 C.E. But when we remember that we can't even name two apostates, perhaps we should think again before presuming a mass flight from Judaism at that time.

*Jonathan Klawans is Professor of Religion at Boston University. His most recent book is Josephus and the Theologies of Ancient Judaism (Oxford, 2012).*

<sup>1</sup> For one key example, see Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), p. 108.

## Archaeological Views

*continued from page 28*

ancient Israelite religious practices.

Neither Iron Age archaeology nor the texts of the Bible show an evolution from a crude earthen altar to a more ornate four-horned altar. Both forms existed at the same time by the deliberate choice of whatever priesthood controlled a temple or "High Place." The Deuteronomistic History (the books of Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings) that modern critical scholars see as coming from the southern kingdom of Judah takes issue with the religious practices of the northern kingdom of Israel as well as some practices within Judah. The earthen altars may have been one of many points of friction between the views of the Deuteronomistic Historians and, on the other hand, Israelite religious practices. According to the Bible (i.e., Deuteronomistic Historians), worship centers in the north were controlled by non-Levite priests appointed by the northern king (1 Kings 12:31). Which altar is the "correct" one for ancient Israelites: the four-horned altar or the earthen altar? When it comes to the dynamic period of the Iron Age before the Babylonian exile, the answer might be both.

*Casey Sharp has served as staff at Tel Burna, Jaffa and Ashkelon and is a founding member of the Society for Humanitarian Archaeological Research and Exploration (SHARE). While finishing his education at the University of Haifa, he is also supervising excavation of the Late Bronze Age cultic complex at Tel Burna.*

## AUTHORS



**McCollough**

**Tom McCollough** ("Searching for Cana: Where Jesus Turned Water into Wine," p. 30) is the Nelson D. and Mary McDowell Rodes Professor of Religion and Chair of the Religion Program at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. He is Director of the Archaeological Excavations at Khirbet Qana (Cana of Galilee) and coeditor, with Douglas R. Edwards, of *Archaeology and the Galilee: Text and Context in the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Scholars Press, 1997).

**Michael Eisenberg** ("Pan at Hippos—Face of Greek God Unearthed," p. 40) is Director of the Hippos-Sussita Excavations under the auspices of the Zinman Institute of Archaeology at the University of Haifa. He is a Senior Researcher at the Zinman Institute and a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Archaeology, University of Haifa.



**Eisenberg**



**Sanders**

**Paul Sanders** ("Missing Link in Hebrew Bible Formation," p. 46) is Assistant Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology at the Protestantse Theologische Universiteit, based in Amsterdam.

**Leo Depuydt** ("Coptic—Egypt's Christian Language," p. 53) is Professor of Egyptology and Assyriology at Brown University. Originally from Belgium, Depuydt studied ancient Greek, Roman and Near Eastern languages and civilizations. His forthcoming book is *Prolegomena to the Complete Physical and Mathematical Theory of Rational Human Intelligence in Boolean, Lagrangian, and Maxwellian Mode*.



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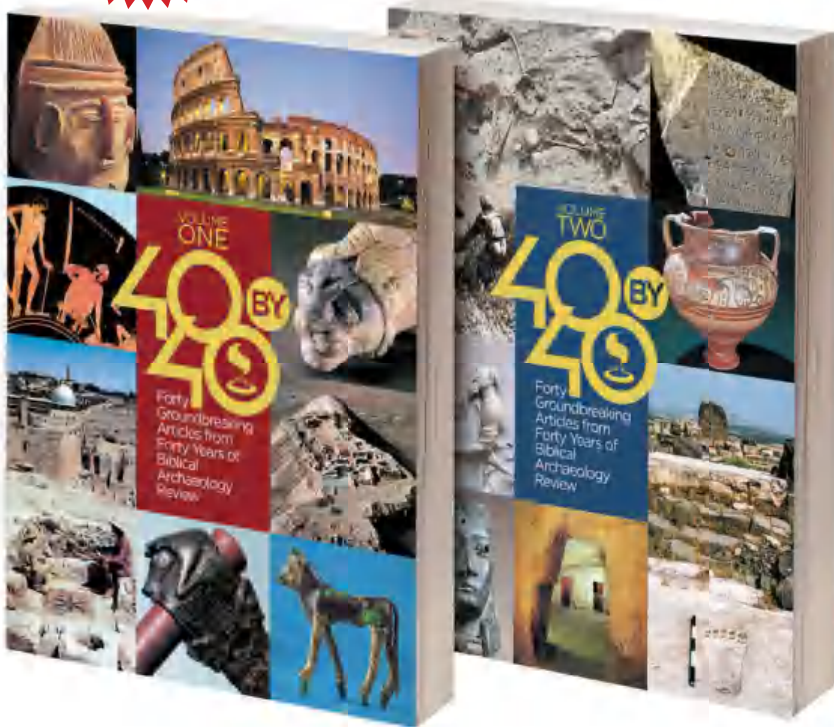
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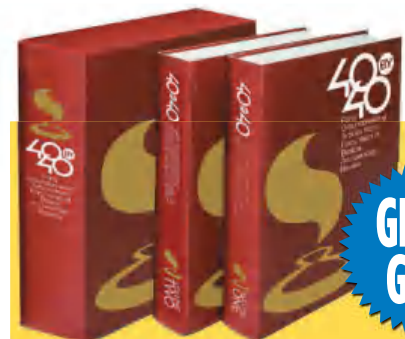
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## Myrina, Isle of Lemnos

This first-century B.C.E. terracotta from Myrina on the Isle of Lemnos, Greece, is one of several portraying women in ordinary activities, including even something as mundane as using a toilet. Very rarely is a man depicted, and when one appears it is usually in connection with a woman: kissing, cuddling and playing games.

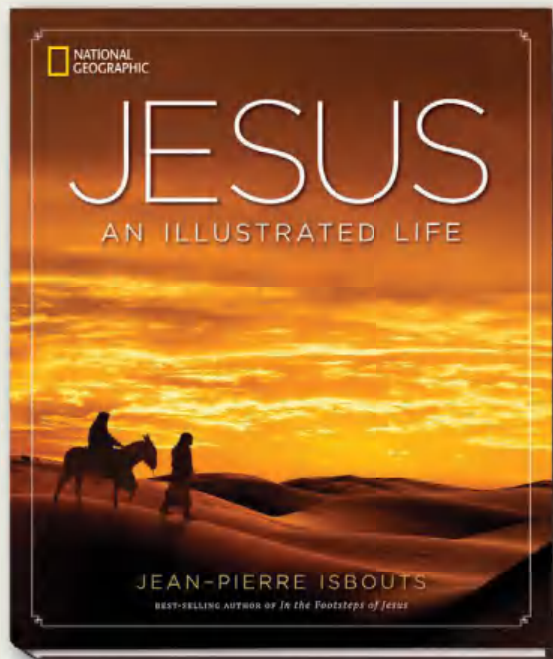
This woman on a donkey is reminiscent of the common artistic portrayal of Mary riding into Bethlehem, a tradition that does not appear in the New Testament, but rather in the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James, which dates c. 145 C.E.

This ancient pre-Madonna is in the Louvre in Paris.





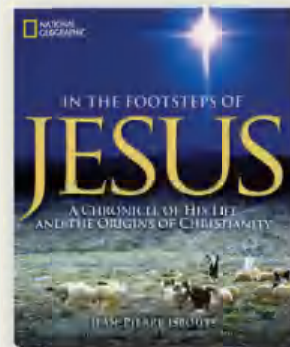
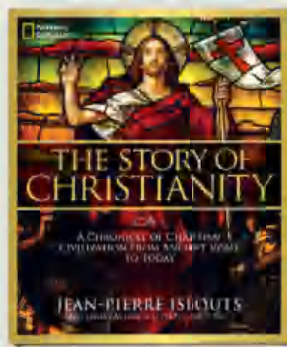
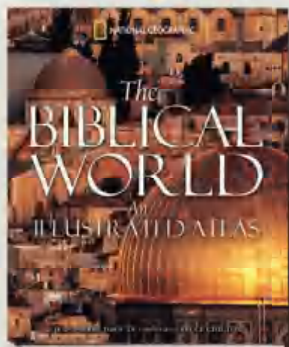
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